THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO

FAIRY TALES

Edited by Maria Tatar

The Cambridge Companion to Fairy Tales

Fairy tales have never known geographical, disciplinary, or cultural borders. In many ways, they provided a model for thinking about storytelling on a transnational level long before comparative literature began transforming itself into world literature. As the simple expression of complex thought, fairy tales have increasingly become the focus of intense scholarly inquiry. In this *Companion*, international scholars from a range of academic disciplines explore the historical origins, cultural dissemination, and psychological power of these stories, and offer model interpretations of tales from a variety of traditions and sources, including Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and the *Thousand and One Nights*. Rather than disenchanting the stories, the essays in this volume broaden our understanding of them and deepen our appreciation of the cultural work they do. A chronology and guide to further reading contribute to the usefulness of the volume for students and scholars.

MARIA TATAR is the John L. Loeb Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures, and chairs the Program in Folklore and Mythology at Harvard University. She is the author of *The Annotated Brothers Grimm* (2012), *Enchanted Hunters: The Power of Stories in Childhood* (2009), and may other volumes.

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Contributors

Cristina Bacchilega is Professor of English at the University of Hawaii-Mānoa. She is the author of *Fairy Tales Transformed: 21st-Century Adaptations and the Politics of Wonder* (Wayne State University Press), *Legendary Hawaii and the Politics of Place* (University of Pennsylvania Press), and *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies* (University of Pennsylvania Press). She currently serves, with Anne E. Duggan, as co-editor of *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*.

Shuli Barzilai is Professor of English at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Author of *Lacan and the Matter of Origins* (Stanford University Press) and *Tales of Bluebeard and His Wives from Late Antiquity to Postmodern Times* (Routledge), she has published articles in *Critique*, *Marvels & Tales*, *PMLA*, *Signs*, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, and *Word & Image*, among other journals.

Stephen Benson
is Senior Lecturer in the School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia. He is the author of *Cycles of Influence: Fiction, Folktale, Theory* (Wayne State University Press) and *Literary Music* (Ashgate), and the editor of *Contemporary Fiction and the Fairy Tale* (Wayne State University Press).

Holly Blackford is Professor of English at Rutgers University-Camden. Her books include *Out of this World: Why Literature Matters to Girls* (Teachers College, Columbia University), *Mockingbird Passing: Closeted Traditions and Sexual Curiosities in Harper Lee's Novel* (University of Tennessee Press), and *The Myth of Persephone in Girls' Fantasy Literature* (Routledge). She has also edited *100 Years of Anne with an 'e': The Centennial Study of "Anne of Green Gables"* (University of Calgary Press).

Nancy Canepa is Associate Professor of French and Italian at Dartmouth College. She is the author of *Out of the Woods: The Origins of the Literary Fairy Tale in Italy and France* (Wayne State University Press) and *From Court to Forest: Giambattista Basile's "Lo cunto de li cunti" and the Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale* (Wayne State University Press). She has also edited and translated *The*

Adventures of Pinocchio (Zoland Books) and Giambattista Basile's *The Tale of Tales or Entertainment for the Little Ones* (Wayne State University Press).

Valdimar Hafstein
is Associate Professor of Folkloristics and Ethnology at the University of Iceland. He has published on topics ranging from heritage theory to copyright, from UNESCO to contemporary and medieval legends, and from traditional wrestling to CCTV. He chaired Iceland's National Commission for UNESCO in 2011–12 and has served since 2013 as president of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore.

Armando Maggi is Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Chicago, where he also serves on the History of Culture Committee. He has published many volumes on early modern culture, among them *Satan's Rhetoric: A Study of Renaissance Demonology* (University of Chicago Press), *In the Company of Demons* (University of Chicago Press), and *Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi: Selected Revelations* (Paulist). He has just completed a volume on early modern and contemporary fairy tales titled *Preserving the Spell*.

Ulrich Marzolph
is Professor of Islamic Studies at the Georg-August University in Göttingen, Germany, and a senior member of the editorial committee of the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*. He specializes in the narrative culture of the Muslim Middle East, with emphasis on Arab and Persian folk narrative and popular literature. His recent publications include *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* (together with Richard van Leeuwen), *The Arabian Nights Reader* (Wayne State University Press), and *The Arabian Nights in Transnational Perspective* (Wayne State University Press).

Maria Nikolajeva is Professor of Education at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. She is the author and editor of many books, the most recent being *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers* (Routledge) and *From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children's Literature* (Scarecrow). She has served as President of the International Research Society for Children's Literature and was one of the senior editors of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*. In 2005 she was honored with the International

Grimm Award for lifetime achievement in children's literature research.

Maria Tatar
is the John L. Loeb Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures and Folklore and Mythology at Harvard University. She is the author of *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, *Classic Fairy Tales*, *Enchanted Hunters: The Power of Stories in Childhood* (all published by W.W. Norton), and many other volumes. A frequent contributor to *NPR*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times*, she is currently at work on a volume of African American folktales.

Francisco Vaz da Silva is Professor of Folklore and Anthropology at Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (Portugal). He serves on the editorial board of *Marvels & Tales* and *Narrative Culture*. His publications include *Metamorphosis: The Dynamics of Symbolism in European Fairy Tales* (Peter Lang), *Archeology of Intangible Heritage* (Peter Lang), and an annotated seven-volume collection of European fairy tales, *Contos Maravilhosos Europeus*.

Jack Zipes
is Professor Emeritus of German and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota. In addition to his scholarly work, he is an active storyteller in public schools and has worked with children's theaters in Europe and the United States. Some of his major publications include *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales* (University of Texas Press), *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (Routledge), and *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (Princeton University Press). He has also edited *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* and is editor-in-chief of the series *Oddly Modern Fairy Tales* published by Princeton University Press. Most recently he has published *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films* (Routledge).

Chronology

1550–3	*The Pleasant Nights,* a collection of fairy tales by the Venetian Giovanni Francesco Straparola, appears in print.
1634–6	Giambattista Basile's *The Tale of Tales, or Entertainments for the Little Ones,* also known as *The Pentamarone,* is published after the author's death in 1632.
1697	Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy publishes *Tales of the Fairies*.
	Charles Perrault publishes *Stories, or Tales from Times Past*.
1704–17	Antoine Galland translates the *Thousand and One Nights* into French.
1740	Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve publishes *Beauty and the Beast*.
1785–9	Forty-one volumes of *The Fairies' Cabinet, or Collection from Fairy Tales and Other Tales of Wonder* appear in France.
1812–15	Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm publish *Children's Stories and Household Tales* in two volumes.
1814–15	E. T. A. Hoffmann publishes his *Fantasy Pieces in the Manner of Jacques Callot*.
1835	Hans Christian Andersen publishes his first volume of fairy tales, including "The Tinderbox" and "The Princess on the Pea."
1841–4	Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe publish *Norwegian Folktales*.
1846	Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Feathertop" appears in print, followed by *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* in 1851.

1853–4	George Cruikshank publishes his *Fairy Library*, with new renditions of “Cinderella” and “Jack and the Beanstalk.”
1855–63	Alexander Afanasev publishes *Russian Folktales*, containing 640 tales.
1890	Joseph Jacobs publishes *English Fairy Tales*, followed by volumes on *Indian Fairy Tales* (1892), *Celtic Fairy Tales* (1892), and other collections.
1900	L. Frank Baum publishes *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.
1910	Finnish scholar Antti Aarne publishes the *Index of the Types of the Folktale*.
1935	Zora Neale Hurston’s *Mules and Men* appears in print.
1937	Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is released to theaters.
1939	Birthdate of Margaret Atwood, author of works ranging from *The Robber Bridegroom* and “Bluebeard’s Egg” to *Lady Oracle*, and other works of fiction.
1943	Tex Avery makes *Red Hot Riding Hood*.
1956	Italo Calvino publishes *Italian Folktales*.
1961	Anne Sexton publishes *Transformations*, fairy-tale poems inspired by the Brothers Grimm collection.
1973	Maurice Sendak illustrates the Brothers Grimm in *The Juniper Tree and Other Tales from the Brothers Grimm.*
1976	Bruno Bettelheim publishes *The Uses of Enchantment*.
1979	Angela Carter publishes *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*.
1982	Roald Dahl publishes *Revolting Rhymes*, with parodies of six popular fairy tales.
1986	Premiere of *Into the Woods*, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by James Lapine.

1982–7	*Shelley Duvall's Faerie Tale Theater* features twenty-seven adaptations of fairy tales.
2004	Hans-Jörg Uther publishes his three-volume *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and a Bibliography*.

Abbreviations

Many of the contributions in this volume refer to specific fairy tales as belonging to a certain "tale type." The concept of the tale type was originally developed by the Finnish scholar Antti Aarne, who published the *Index of the Types of the Folktale* (*Verzeichnis der Märchentypen*) in 1910 as a classification system for stories that belong to oral traditions. The volume was twice revised and expanded by the American folklorist Stith Thompson. Despite its flaws, which are carefully enumerated by Hans-Jörg Uther in his introduction to the 2004 revision of the work, it remains a standard work for folklorists today, giving them a shorthand form for identifying and situating in a larger storytelling matrix the tales they analyze. In the chapters that follow, ATU 425C, for example, will refer to "Beauty and the Beast." To avoid confusion, the tale type number will not appear in isolation and will be followed by the standard name for that tale type: for example, ATU 327 ("The Children and the Ogre").

Introduction

Maria Tatar

“Once upon a time” takes us down a road well traveled yet often with a startling twist or turn in the path. “Little Red Riding Hood” may feel like a completely familiar story until we see it reframed in an advertisement for a red-hooded automobile making its way through the woods, father at the wheel and daughter in the back seat. The girl in red has appeared on screen, at a Halloween party, with weapons in her basket “just in case.” She has turned up in urban settings, wearing a red hoodie, seeking revenge on a sexual predator. Claude Lévi-Strauss tells us that myths are created through a logic that resembles the workings of a kaleidoscope, “an instrument which also contains bits and pieces by means of which structural patterns are realized.” Just one simple twist, and something completely new, yet also deeply familiar, emerges.[1]

Fairy tales, like myths, capitalize on the three concepts the Greeks captured in the term *kaleidoscope*: sparkling beauty, austere form, and visual power. Once told around the fireside or at the hearth, with adults and children sharing the storytelling space, they captured the play of light and shadow in their environment, creating special effects that yoked beauty with horror. Imagine a time before electronic entertainments, with long dark nights around campsites and other sources of heat and light, and it is not much of a challenge to realize that human beings, always quick to adapt, began exchanging information, trading wisdom, and reporting gossip. “Literature,” Vladimir Nabokov tells us, “was born on the day when a boy came crying ‘wolf, wolf,’ and there was no wolf behind him.”[2] And that boy’s story was no doubt both compact and vivid. Once the conversation started about that wolf, it was easy enough, in subsequent versions, to begin exaggerating, overstating, inflating, and doing all the things that make for lively entertainments. Fairy tales are always more interesting when something is added to them. Each new telling recharges the narrative, making it crackle and hiss with cultural energy. The simple story of a wolf and an encounter in the woods can take up questions of predator/prey relationships, innocence and seduction, or monstrosity and

alterity. Over time, it is given layers of depth as it is interpreted and refashioned by successive storytelling cultures.

What once belonged to the childhood of culture has been relegated to the culture of childhood, even though fairy tales continue to circulate today not just in the nursery but also in adult cultural production, where they often appear in disguised form as memes, talismans, and tropes. Today we make fine calibrations in the repertoire of traditional tales, with everything from gentle, child-friendly versions to fractured, twisted productions for the grown-ups. The agendas in fairy-tale books for children take a mellow turn, with writers and illustrators walking a fine line between melodramatic plot lines and constructive messaging. By contrast, NBC's crime-horror series *Grimm*, ABC's mind-bending *Once upon a Time*, and Guillermo del Toro's disturbing *Pan's Labyrinth* pump up the stories for adult audiences, infusing them with existential torment, surreal plot twists, and explosive special effects.

Despite our constant efforts to turn fairy tales into instruments for conveying messages and morals, we remain drawn to the stories in large part because they open up the great question of "What if?" Giving us worst-case-possible scenarios along with best-possible outcomes, they set in motion a chain of perils and adventures larger than life and twice as unnatural. Giambattista Basile and Charles Perrault began the trend of mining stories for messages when they published their tales, appending a moral, sometimes two, at the end of each tale. Stories that had once indulged in portraying sexual excesses and taboo desires suddenly had a moral, one that was sometimes as entertaining as the story itself, a punch line as it were. These early efforts to teach and preach were marked by high irony, along with the candid acknowledgment that trying to extract a tidy moral is part of the narrative fun.

Basile's *Tale of Tales*, published under a pseudonym in 1634 and 1636, indulged in an extravagant baroque style that quickly becomes evident even in the summaries prefacing each tale. Here is the synopsis for "Sun, Moon, and Talia," a version of the story that today goes by the name of "Sleeping Beauty":

> Talia dies because of a little piece of flax and is left in a palace, where a king chances to pass by and causes her to have two children. The children fall into the hands of the king's jealous wife, who orders that they be cooked and served to their father and that Talia be burned. The cook saves the children and Talia is freed by the king, who has his wife thrown into the same fire that had been prepared for Talia.

Appended to a story that puts on display necrophiliac desires, cannibalistic urges, and theatrical punishments is a pithy moral about how "for those who are lucky, *good rains down even when they are sleeping*."

The same dissonant chords are sounded at the end of the tales written down by Charles Perrault. "Donkeyskin" recounts the flight of a young woman from her home, after her father proposes to her following the death of his wife. Donkeyskin not only survives but also marries the prince of a neighboring kingdom. "It is not difficult to see that the moral to this story teaches children that it is better to expose yourself to harsh adversity than to neglect your duty," Perrault tells us. He adds:

> Virtue may sometimes seem ill fated, but it is always crowned with success. Even the most powerful logic is no defense against frenzied love and ardent ecstasy, especially when a lover is prepared to squander his rich treasures. Finally this story shows that pure water and brown bread are enough nourishment for young women, so long as they have beautiful clothes, and that there is no woman on earth who does not believe that she is beautiful and who does not see herself as getting the golden apple if she were to be mixed in with the three beauties of that famous contest.

In the proliferation of morals added to a tale about the abuse of paternal authority, we can see a desperate effort to cover up the simple facts rather than to reveal the complicated truths of the narrative.

Fairy tales, rather than sending messages, teaching morals, or constructing lessons, get conversations going. Piling on one outrage after another, they oblige us to react, to take positions and make judgments,

enabling us to work through cultural contradictions using the power of a symbolic story. We are in “once upon a time,” rather than in the here and now, in a safe space that allows us to debate the terms of plots that turn on family conflicts ranging from sibling rivalry and parental abandonment to maternal jealousy and paternal belligerence. Whether they are delivered to us through oral storytelling cultures, books, or electronic media, they are to double duty bound, entertaining and provoking, and above all ensuring that a culture of silence cannot descend on us.

Much of the magic of fairy tales derives from their mutability. In a flash Hansel and Gretel turn into witch hunters rather than abject victims. In *The Singer of Tales*, Albert Lord reminded us that there is really no conflict between preserving traditions and creating them anew. Tradition is, rather, preserved by constantly re-creating it.[3] Today it is often the iconoclasts who keep the tales alive, and in fact it is the fate of iconoclasts to preserve the very stories that they seek to destroy. Stories like Angela Carter’s “The Bloody Chamber” or Margaret Atwood’s “Bluebeard’s Egg,” the poems in Anne Sexton’s *Transformations*, and films like *Wolf* (1994), *Shrek* (2001), or *This Very Moment* (2003) seek to subvert the premises of the stories on which they draw, but as they do so, they take us back to the traditions from which they derive, challenging us to identify differences and deviations. *Shrek* elevates beastliness and monstrosity into a position of moral superiority; Roald Dahl’s Little Red Riding Hood becomes a gun-toting predator; and Jon Scieszka’s *True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* turns the wolf into a victim who becomes the target of our sympathy. Suddenly we begin to wonder why the new departs from the old and we ask ourselves what that reveals about our own cultural values.

The term “fairy tale” has not served the genre well. Often dismissed as an infantile confection, the fairy tale in fact rarely features the sprightly supernatural creatures so prominent in its name. It was the French, more specifically Mme d’Aulnoy, who gave us the term “contes de fées,” leading us to frame the stories as if they turn on the lives of diminutive woodland folk rather than ordinary people. In English, the term was first used in 1749, casually by Horace Walpole, and with self-conscious purpose when Sarah Fielding called a story embedded in *The Governess*, published in 1749: “The Princess Hebe: A Fairy Tale.” The German term “Märchen” points to the origins of the stories in the notion of news,

reports, tall tales, rumors, and gossip – in short of talk and social exchanges. Fairy tales hover somewhere between tall tale and high fantasy, anchored in the real world, but with embellishments and misrepresentations that turn their lies into higher truths.

There is magic in these tall tales, and the presence of enchantment is perhaps the defining feature of the genre.[4] We are not so much in the realm of fairies as in the domain of what J. R. R. Tolkien referred to as *Faërie*, that "Perilous Realm" where anything can happen. The wolf that appears on the forest path can converse like a gentleman; a boy takes a bite of lettuce and turns into a donkey; a young woman leans against a tree and it turns into a handsome prince; a horse's head nailed to a gate speaks poetry. Again and again we witness transformations that break down the divide between life and death, nature and culture, animal and human, or beauty and monstrosity. Fairy tales take up deep cultural contradictions, creating what Claude Lévi-Strauss called "miniature models" – stories that dispense with extraneous details to give us primal anxieties and desires, the raw rather than the cooked, as it were. They use magic, not to falsify or delude, but rather to enable counterfactuals, to move us to imagine "what if?" or to wonder "why?" And that move, as both Plato and Aristotle assured us, marks the beginning of philosophy. While fairy-tale heroes and heroines wander, we track their moves and wonder, in both senses of the term, at their adventures. It is no surprise that the term "wonder tale" has been proposed and embraced as an alternative to the misleading "fairy tale."

If fairy-tale protagonists seem always to be on the move, traveling lightly and quickly, the tales themselves are constantly migrating into new cultures and new media, reinventing themselves along the way. These days fairy tales are passed on to us through what media gurus call multiple "delivery systems," and the stories have reclaimed a multi-generational appeal. Perhaps that is why fairy tales seem to be on steroids today, for the mythical power of fairy tales seems amplified in an age of electronic entertainments, with stories like "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," "Hansel and Gretel," "Cinderella," "Briar Rose," or "Puss in Boots" taking front and center stage in Hollywood films but also flashing out at us from productions for which fairy tales seem unlikely source material. Who can forget the shoe that fits in Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* or the

sleeping beauty Broomhilda von Shaft in his film *Django Unchained*? Lévi-Strauss's "bits and pieces" are all there even when they do not necessarily lead to the kind of structuring pattern that would make the work an adaptation rather than the repository of fairy-tale tropes and motifs.

Many of the most revered experts have insisted on a strict typological divide between fairy tales, banished to the culture of childhood, and myth, foundational tales that are treated with reverence as sacred stories belonging to high culture. "Fairy tales are told for entertainment," Joseph Campbell declared. "You've got to distinguish between the myths that have to do with the serious matter of living life in terms of society and of nature, and stories with some of those same motifs that are told for entertainment."[5] Campbell correctly recognized the shared repertoire of motifs in fairy tales and myth, but unlike Lévi-Strauss, who believed that all versions of a story belong to a larger mythical narrative, he trivialized the fairy tale as a form of cultural production told merely to entertain with no higher spiritual mission.

Just how robust is that shared repertoire and the commitment to working out cultural conflicts? If we turn to Greek mythology, we discover that one tale begins with a girl, a basket from mother, a meadow of flowers, and a god disguised as a bull. Instead of the marauding wolf in fairy tales recorded by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, we find a bull, less ferocious than tame, playful, and seductive. The ancient tale about Zeus and Europa, which has, of course, been read by generations of schoolchildren raised on *Bulfinch's Mythology* and Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*, informs not only "Little Red Riding Hood" but also "Beauty and the Beast." Both tales circulate comfortably in the world of children's literature, even though, for the Greeks, as for us today, the story of Europa's abduction challenges us to think hard about the line dividing rape from seduction. Both myth and fairy tale take up powerful questions about innocence and predatory behavior through the optic of the nature/culture divide.

That it is possible to miniaturize myths and dilute their "seriousness" and sacred energy becomes evident when we read Nathaniel Hawthorne's version of the Zeus/Europa encounter in his *Tanglewood Tales*. In that recasting, the girl (and I use that term advisedly) meets the god, who has

disguised himself as a remarkably beautiful bull. Seduced by the scent of ambrosia and the sounds of sweet music, Europa climbs on the bull's back and is carried off to the sea. "Was there ever such a gentle, sweet, pretty, and amiable creature as this bull, and ever such a nice playmate for a little girl?" Hawthorne asks.[6] Just as Hawthorne lightens the myth, fairy tales, I would argue, can rise to the "seriousness" that Campbell demands, as any reader of Giambattista Basile, Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, or Joseph Jacobs can testify.

Part of the art and magic of fairy tales has to do with their power to make something from nothing. Once told around campfires and firesides, these stories were nourished not just by attentive audiences but also by the chiaroscuro effects outdoors and in interior spaces. It is the sorcery of words that kept them alive, as they endlessly transformed themselves, erasing their traces at times but also migrating into print culture, where they have been preserved in a material form with the potential now to change into bits of information traveling along circuits via electronic impulses. This second industrial revolution has been weightless in many ways, requiring hardware to be sure, but nothing like the printing press or the fossil-fueled modes of transport that serve as a delivery system for print materials.

Despite a drive to de-materialize, fairy tales also embrace the reality principle, for their tellers repeatedly emphasize an engagement with material culture when they spin their yarns and weave their plots. The tales themselves work hard to create vivacity, mobilizing just the right words to enable us to visualize characters, scenes, and artifacts. Words become wands when we hear about a princess tossing her golden ball into the air, a house with windows of spun sugar, or a beautiful bird that emerges from a blazing tree surrounded by a mist. Fairy tales use a minimalist style to evoke luminosity, the enchantments that draw us into their world to escape the unbearable weight of everyday life and to embrace a lightness of being. On the one hand, there is a drive to create substance, materiality, or thingness, and on the other hand, a compulsion to affirm the weightless charms of light, airy nothingness.

Let us look for a moment at "Hansel and Gretel," a story set in a time of famine, when there is literally hardly anything left to "bite" or "break." In this time of want and need, Hansel and Gretel use their wits and cunning in

vain. They are abandoned in the forest, forced to subsist on a few berries lying on the ground. Famished and exhausted they lie down and fall asleep. It is at this point that privation is transformed into lightness and creates a gateway into a zone of wish fulfillment. Italo Calvino, after reading Kafka's "The Bucket Rider," concluded that the tale of a man who sets out in the middle of winter to beg for coal can be read in optimistic terms: "The empty bucket, symbol of privation and desire and seeking, raising you to the point at which a humble request can no longer be satisfied – all this opens the road to endless reflection." And so the abject bucket rider, stripped of all means of subsistence, becomes a model of transcendent asceticism – rising into the regions of the "ice mountains" and "lost forever."[7] Lost to the world, perhaps, but perhaps not to himself, and certainly not to us. What Kafka may be telling us is that having nothing translates into something of incomparable ethereal value. And so it is only when Hansel and Gretel lose everything, even consciousness, that a world of seeming plenty emerges before their eyes, offering them bread, cake, and sugar on the outside, and milk and pancakes with sugar, apples, and nuts on the inside.

Much as "Hansel and Gretel" takes to an extreme what Vladimir Propp famously called "lack," as the foundational condition of the fairy tale, and celebrates it as the gateway to adventure, conflict, and happily-ever-after, it also, in a dialectical move, installs material objects, pearls and jewels, as the embodiment of its highest good.[8] As Max Lüthi has told us, fairy tales give us the beauty of shimmering surfaces and sparkling exteriors to express what matters, privileging metal and mineral forms above all else.[9] And so the solidity of pearls and jewels serves as an antidote to the poverty and lack described at the beginning, symbolizing a source of plenty and plenitude that has its analogue in the meal shared in the final scene of the tale by the two children with their father.

In many ways, we can applaud the fairy tale's refusal to romanticize poverty. Instead it aestheticizes wealth, showing that there is something renewing and life-saving about the properties of material objects. And yet recall that for readers the charismatic material objects remain without substance, just words that evoke solidity and vivacity, animating us with their kaleidoscopic power – once again, beauty, austere form, and visual power.

The spirit of storytelling animates the chapters in these volumes. The contributors all focus on a specific tale or set of tales to model an interpretive pathway and to dig deeply through the historical and symbolic layers of the fairy tale. The study of fairy tales offers up many challenges, not the least of which comes in the form of a text that is unstable and indeterminate, a text that exists only in copies of itself. Valdimar Hafstein's chapter on fairy tales, copyright, and the public domain opens the volume by interrogating the division between authorship and folk tradition and proposing a third term, the collector-editor, to help us manage our ways of thinking about cultural production. Collaborative creativity, as he points out, is the norm rather than the exception, even today, yet we persist in installing the notion of a solitary genius as the source of originality and authority in our cultural imagination. Taking as his point of departure a tale by H. C. Andersen and on the Danish author's indignation that he might be seen as a collector or *bricoleur* rather than a genius poet, Hafstein sets the stage for how we understand the status of the tales studied in chapters that follow.

In the contributions that follow, fairy tales in collections edited by the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, and others to the *Thousand and One Nights* become the targets of inquiry and analysis. The tight focus on Western traditions, for the most part, may seem narrow and limiting to some, but it has the advantage of building on and consolidating a growing knowledge base on European traditions, including what those traditions appropriated from other cultures and what circulated back in turn.

In "Female Tricksters as Double Agents," I attempt to identify a female trickster and to trace her "origins" to Scheherazade, who tells stories to save her own life as well as to transform the culture of violence in which she lives. I then move to consider how the Grimms' Gretel and her literary progeny reinvent the archetype for modern times. Desperate times (like famine) require desperate measures, and hungry heroines develop strategic measures to survive and to effect social change. Shuli Barzilai takes up a very different cultural heroine in her chapter "While Beauty Sleeps," showing how the nexus of sleep, beauty, and sexual violence persists over a period of centuries from the medieval *Perceforest* to Almodóvar's *Talk to Her*. Much as we celebrate the mutability of the fairy tale, its constant

reinvention as it migrates into new times and places, is there in fact a durable core that resists eradication?

Cristina Bacchilega turns attention to the web of cultural practices encoded in every fairy tale and its adaptations. In “Snow White and Rose Red” she uncovers non-linear genealogies in a range of hypertexts that reshape our understanding of the ideological and cultural work invested in the fairy tale as discursive formation rather than as solitary, free-standing story. By contrast, Francisco Vaz da Silva takes on an array of fairy-tale hypertexts arranged around “The Tale about the Maiden Who Seeks Her Brothers” and, through anthropologically informed analysis, reveals the stable components in that story, along with the cultural stakes at the heart of the tale.

The vexed question of fairy-tale morality and reader response to fairy-tale ethics is raised by both Nancy Canepa, in “Trickster Heroes in ‘The Boy Steals the Ogre’s Treasure,’” and Maria Nikolajeva, in her chapter “Exploring Empathy and Ethics in Tales about Three Brothers.” The protagonists of fairy tales are notorious for their bad manners – lying, cheating, and stealing their way to success. Kindness may be valorized, but cleverness reigns supreme. “What do we learn about the moral fiber of fairy-tale heroes?” and “What do we discover about how our own minds process narratives?” are the questions posed in chapters that draw on a host of trickster hypertexts as well as the tools of cognitive poetics.

Armando Maggi and Stephen Benson take up the interpretive challenges of fairy tales, with a meditation on how our homogenizing constructions of a story like “Cinderella” deprive it of its richly textured history, and a reading of the lyrical intensity of “The Juniper Tree.” Occasionally our confidence about knowing a fairy tale gets in the way of interpretive work, just as our confidence about reading a fairy tale can obstruct our understanding of its deeper meaning. Fairy tales are layered with cultural complications and emotional nuance, and both these chapters gently remind us that all interpretive efforts can only be partial and provisional.

Ulrich Marzolph builds bridges between the European sources and traditions to the *Thousand and One Nights*, showing how the heterogeneous collection has in many ways become oxygenated rather than depleted through its multiple and varied cultural interactions even as

he identifies a disturbing tendency to turn the *Arabian Nights* into European cultural property. Appropriation, exploitation, and commodification are the concerns voiced by Jack Zipes in his chapter on the "media-hyping of fairy tales" – strategies used to de-historicize fairy tales and place them in the service of a consumer culture that celebrates "meaningless and wanton consumption." In a sense, Zipes shows us how corporate fairy tales lead directly to Jean Baudrillard's concept of the hyperreal, a vast cultural wasteland in which content has been emptied of historical referentiality and symbolic meaning. This is not the zone of happily-ever-after but a toxic environment that deprives us of the utopian possibilities encoded in the fairy tale.

In the chapter that closes the volume, Holly Blackford takes a competing tradition, the *Kunstmärchen* or literary fairy tale, and traces its migration from Germany into the United States, showing how wizards and automata were resettled and transformed into artists, confidence men, self-made activists, and entrepreneurs. Like Hawthorne's scarecrow "Feathertop," the new fairy tale is made from a "ragbag of fine materials that represent various European nations, combined with common farm items." Engaging in *bricolage*, tinkering, patching, repairing, and reinventing, these American artists made the tales their own – just as their European counterparts once did.

Notes

1 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (University of Chicago Press, 1966), 36. The Little Red Riding Hood examples cited include Episode 60 in the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* series as well as David Slade's *Hard Candy* (2005).

2 Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature*, ed. Fredson Bowers (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 5.

3 Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 29.

4 As Stephen Swann Jones puts it, “fairy tales depict magical or marvellous events or phenomena as a valid part of human experience.” See his *The Fairy Tale: The Magic Mirror of Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 9.

5 Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Anchor, 1991), 167–8.

6 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Tanglewood Tales* (Chicago, IL: Rand McNally, 1913), 92.

7 Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 28.

8 “Lack” and “Lack Liquidated” are two of the key functions in Vladimir Propp’s thirty-one functions of the dramatis personae in fairy tales. See his *Morphology of the Folktale*, 2nd edn. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

9 See in particular the chapter on the abstract style of fairy tales, in *The European Folktale: Form and Nature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 24–36.

1 Fairy tales, copyright, and the public domain

Valdimar Hafstein

In 1873, an ailing Hans Christian Andersen traveled to Switzerland, where he sought treatment at a spa in Glion, high above Lake Geneva, drinking daily doses of whey – a cure that brought affluent people from all over Europe to Swiss resorts. The whey did nothing for him. Not surprising considering that two years later he died of a cancer from which he was in all likelihood already suffering. A family from Hamburg stayed in the room directly above him, a Mr. Mai, his wife, and their young daughter. Andersen kept company with them, among other guests in the spa, and on Thursday, May 29, he records in his diary:

> The weather doesn't look promising today either. I slept with many interruptions, but slept nonetheless. My ringworm itches constantly and I have many small liver spots on my legs, what does that mean? A letter from Mrs. Melchior and from Simon Henriques. A visit from Mr. Mai, who maintained that the story about "What the Old Man Does" was taken from Grimm. I told him it was a Danish folktale and that Grimm had never composed a fairy tale, he was only a collector…I am not in a good mood.[1]

"What the Old Man Does Is Always Right" appeared in 1861 in the second series of Andersen's *New Fairy Tales and Stories*. By this time, Andersen was easily Scandinavia's most famous author, internationally acclaimed for his fairy tales that had already been translated many times into a number of languages. In introductory remarks to a complete collection of his tales published in 1874, a year after Mr. Mai's visit, Andersen notes that "'What the Old Man Does Is Always Right' is one of the Danish folktales I heard as a child and I have here retold in my own way."[2]

Ten recordings of the tale are found in the Danish Folklore Archives, most of them recorded from 1854 to 1902 and the earliest from 1756.[3] Andersen was correct, then, in explaining to Mr. Mai that "What the Old Man Does Is Always Right" is a traditional folktale and that it was well

known in Denmark, though he overreached perhaps in claiming that it was a Danish folktale. As Mr. Mai pointed out, the Brothers Grimm published a version of the same tale forty-nine years earlier in the first volume of the very first edition of their folktale collection, the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. The Grimms call it "Hans im Glück," or "Lucky Hans," and it is a traditional numskull tale with broad international distribution. According to the *Types of International Folktales* index, it has been recorded in sixty national traditions, including the Dominican Republic, Mexico, China, Japan, and Indonesia.[4]

A review published in *Berlingske Tidende*, the Danish equivalent of *The Times*, praises "What the Old Man Does Is Always Right" as an excellent example of Andersen's storytelling, "distinguished by such a freshness… that even when he tells an old story that we all know…he tells it in such a way that it seems to us a wholly new story, which we are encountering for the first time."[5] A dissenting review published in the *Dansk Maanedsskrift*, a monthly cultural magazine, found however that "What the Old Man Does Is Always Right" was "absolutely the best story" in the collection "precisely because through the magnificence of its subject and its parable-like conciseness it gives the impression of a true folk fiction."[6] The measure of Andersen's authorship in "an old story that we all know" is thus, on the one hand, the degree of originality ("freshness") that he breathes into it through his peculiar manner of telling it, but on the other hand, ironically, the degree to which it captures and conveys the "impression of a true folk fiction." It seems fair to say that the international success of Andersen's fairy tales owes much to how deftly they resolve this paradox. At the same time, it is worth recalling that this dynamic tension between tradition and creativity is not peculiar to Andersen, or even to literary fairy tales. It is the heart of the storyteller's art and characteristic of folklore in general, not only of its literary adaptations.

Andersen was right to disabuse Mr. Mai of the notion that Grimm had "composed a fairy tale," though it is safe to say that he undershot the mark when he maintained that "he was only a collector." If the last four decades' worth of scholarship on the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* has revealed anything, it is that Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, each in his own way, were also dynamic editors and that their interventions were rather

significant, growing with every new edition. All this is well-trodden ground and I will not dwell on it, except to note how clearly established the distinction already was between the role of the collector-editor, in the mold of the Grimms, and that of the author, in our understanding of how texts come into being and of their subsequent circulation and ownership. It has not changed much in the century and half since Andersen sought treatment in Glion.

It is to this distinction that Andersen pointed when he told Mr. Mai that "Grimm had never composed a fairy tale, he was only a collector." He implies that since the Brothers Grimm were not authors of the tale, he could not "take" the tale from Grimm. The Grimms collected from folk tradition; Andersen mined it. That this distinction was lost on Mr. Mai put Andersen in a foul mood.

It is important to note in this context that the Grimms themselves did not claim exclusive rights to the tales they published. It is clear from the publishing history of the tales that they were regarded as common goods, belonging to no one in particular.[7] Individual tales were incorporated into a number of other collections without any acknowledgment, often juxtaposed with tales from Perrault and other sources, even from Andersen.[8] In the introduction to the second edition of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, Wilhelm Grimm insists that the creation of the tales in the collection was shrouded in mystery: "If we ask about their origin, nobody knows of a poet or an author who invented them; they appear everywhere as traditional material."[9] The Brothers Grimm presented themselves as collectors and editors, and they expressly denied authorship. The very rules of the game that they themselves formulated forbade them from creating tales. As Jacob Grimm noted in 1815 in his *Circular Concerning the Collection of Folk Poetry*: "It is important that the items be taken down without elaboration and addition with the greatest fidelity and authenticity from the mouths of the narrators, and, whenever possible, in and with their own words in the most accurate and most comprehensive manner."[10]

The *Circular*, the various editions of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* and their many early translations, along with the lively correspondence of the Grimms with colleagues across the continent, helped to inspire the

publication of folklore throughout Europe and beyond.[11] Folklorist Terry Gunnell refers in this context to the "Grimm ripples" of the early nineteenth century.[12] Surfing ripples set in motion by the Danish translation of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, Hans Christian Andersen inscribed himself into a long tradition of fairy-tale literature when he published the first installment of his first volume of *Fairy Tales Told for Children* in 1835. Three out of four tales in this book, Andersen later noted, "are ones I heard during childhood, in the spinning room and during the harvesting of the hops," while the last one was an original composition.[13] Drawing on notions of oral tradition in common currency in the nineteenth century, Andersen presents his own relationship to folk tradition as that of a young male apprentice to humble old women whose names go unspoken: "Close beside the place where the leaves were burned, the poor old women had their spinning-room. I often went in there, and was very soon a favorite…[and] they rewarded my eloquence by telling me tales in return; and thus a world as rich as that of the Thousand and One Nights was revealed to me."[14]

This trope of tradition as a poor, frail, and, above all, anonymous old woman might be called the constant muse – constant in the sense of stable, unchanging, and faithful. Andersen is otherwise unrelenting in his defense of his singular genius and the originality of his works, which suggests that the portrayal of his apprenticeship in the spinning room carries symbolic weight. We should not, at any rate, mistake it for a sign of modesty. As we know from numerous biographies, Andersen's conceit was matched only by his vanity. Instead, Andersen's nod to the constant muse is, I think, best understood in the context of an epigraph from Goethe that Andersen cites on the title page of his earliest published fairy tale: "Folktales full of wonder still / the poet's arts with truth can fill."[15]

"And that's a true story." Thus ends Andersen's "Princess on the Pea," one of the tales he attributes to the constant muse. Read in the context of the Goethe epigraph, the closing sentence affirms that this tale, itself of humble origins, has been ennobled by Andersen's poetry – his art makes it "a true story." Its newfound truth is, of course, poetic.[16] In a preface from 1837 to the complete first volume of *Fairy Tales Told for Children*, Andersen writes: "In my childhood I loved to listen to fairy tales and stories. Many of them are still very much alive in my memory…These I

have told in my own way: where I thought it fitting, I have changed them and let imagination freshen the colors in the picture that had begun to fade."[17] This recalls the "freshness" with which the reviewer in *Berlingske Tidende* credits Andersen's storytelling. It is a measure of originality, of the extent to which Andersen makes his own, so to speak, these tales that he borrows from tradition.

"The Princess on the Pea" is number ATU 704 in the tale-type index, but as Christine Shojaei Kawan notes, most recorded versions derive from Andersen's rendition.[18] However, several versions of a similar tale, ATU 545A ("The Cat Castle"), were recorded in Sweden around the time when Andersen might have heard it in Denmark and it seems most likely that Andersen composed his tale on the basis of an oral version he heard.[19]

Whatever his source, we may at any rate be certain that Hans Christian Andersen did not "take" "The Princess on the Pea" from the Brothers Grimm. On the contrary, Andersen accused the Grimms of stealing "The Princess on the Pea" from him. The fifth edition of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, published in 1843, includes a tale called "The Pea Test." According to Grimm scholar Heinz Rölleke, Herman Grimm, Wilhelm's son, recorded the tale in Hessen in 1840.[20] Although the difference between the two texts is substantial, "The Pea Test" is clearly a variant of the same tale as Andersen's "Princess on the Pea," published eight years earlier.[21] No one seriously claims that the Grimms lifted it from the pages of his book, but scholars are not of one mind as to whether or not the version collected by Herman Grimm derives in part from that of Andersen.

Hans Christian Andersen was not in doubt about its derivation. In a letter of 1844 to his friend and benefactor Jonas Collin, he reports an unscheduled visit to Jacob Grimm. To say that Andersen sounds disappointed is a gross understatement. He is appalled, insulted, dismayed: "Would you believe it, he did not know me, knew absolutely nothing of me! I was terribly embarrassed when he asked me what I had written. Finally, I got annoyed, especially when I heard he knew Danish. He maintained he had never heard my name!"[22]

His famously brittle ego (as sensitive as the princess's bottom) bruised, Andersen nurses his wound and writes: "My name is really incredibly well known in Germany; and then the German teller of tales does not know the

only Scandinavian who tells fairy tales!”[23] Andersen’s offense is made worse by the fact that he appears to believe Grimm was feigning ignorance. “Ludicrous” is the term he uses, and here’s why: “Of course, now when praise is heaped upon me and I am told that I am Scandinavia’s most famous poet, I answer that it is not true: Grimm has not even heard my name. That is ludicrous, however, considering that in his new collection of authentic folktales he has apparently included one of my originals.”[24]

Writing a year after the fifth edition of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* saw the light of day, the original to which Andersen refers is none other than “The Princess on the Pea.” Never mind his nods to the constant muse, Andersen feels wronged. He accuses the Brothers Grimm of stealing his story and Jacob Grimm of adding insult to injury by not acknowledging his fame and genius, let alone his authorship.[25] Gone are the poor old ladies in the spinning room, gone the “world as rich as that of the Thousand and One Nights” to which they introduced him; what remains is “one of my originals.”

Originals are the subject of copyright law and the protection it affords. Copyright controls and limits the rights to reproduce, distribute, and perform works that fall under the scope of its protection, and to adapt or produce new works that derive from them. Although Danish publishers and authors were protected as early as 1741 by a royal ordinance forbidding the unauthorized reproduction of works lawfully acquired, the ordinance had only limited value for an author of Hans Christian Andersen’s international fame and acclaim.[26] Outside of Denmark, his children’s stories were translated, pirated, adapted, and reprinted in a great number of versions.[27] His own predictions in a letter to a friend in 1836 were borne out: “Unfortunately, I belong to such a small nation that even though my work is among the most well-read of works, it will hardly be able to feed me.”[28] Thus Edmund Gosse asked Andersen’s permission to translate a collection of his tales and stories published in Denmark in 1872, but eventually wrote back to him crestfallen:

> No one here in London will risk the publication of a translation of your last stories. Perhaps this will surprise you as much as it did me,

> but the reason for it lies in the extreme popularity of your works amongst us. Unless a very cheap and common edition were brought out – and this would not be worth your while or mine – the publishers fear that the translation would at once be pirated by other publishing-houses, and they themselves would lose their profits.[29]

As national law passed by national governments, the legal protection that copyright (or author's rights, as they are known in continental Europe) affords to works of authorship is limited to the territory this law governs. In the absence of international treaties, Danish copyright law thus could not restrict the translation, adaptation, and reproduction of H. C. Andersen's stories outside the borders of Denmark. Indeed, Andersen would have had no legal standing had he wanted to file a suit against the Brothers Grimm for what he considered an adaptation of his original work without permission or proper acknowledgment. But the Grimms were not immune to questions of honor and reputation. "The Pea Test" was left out of subsequent editions of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, most likely because of Andersen's complaints, which cast doubts on its folkloric authenticity.[30]

Hans Christian Andersen died in 1875. As cultural historian Helle Porsdam has noted, he "never saw the work done by Victor Hugo and other authors and publishers, organized in the International Literary Association, towards an international conference on copyright."[31] At their urgent request, the Swiss Federal Council hosted three diplomatic conferences in Berne in 1884–6 to discuss and draft a universal agreement. The Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works was signed in 1886. States that join the Berne Union must guarantee the same protection to authors from other signatory countries as their national copyright laws grant to their own subjects (the principle of national treatment), and signatories agree to meet certain minimum standards in their national laws on authors' rights.[32]

The Berne Convention set up a bureau to handle administrative tasks and in 1970 that bureau merged into the new World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva. Various treaties on copyright and related rights now complement the Berne Convention, but it is still the primary

international convention in the field, with almost universal application, and has been revised a number of times since it was concluded in 1886.

The Berne Union was an exclusive club. Very few countries in what is now referred to as the global South were among its original members. The Convention's reach was extended, however, by article 19, the so-called "colonial clause," which gave imperial centers the right to include their colonies and protectorates.[33] Having wrestled their sovereignty from the colonial powers, newly independent states in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s were required to affirm their loyalty to the Berne Union.[34] Amendments to facilitate their adhesion were a major focus of the Stockholm and Paris revision conferences in 1967 and 1971.[35]

In Stockholm, the Indian delegation proposed to add a provision to protect folklore, and a working group was set up to consider the question.[36] Framed as a topic of special concern to developing countries, the ensuing discussions were groundbreaking inasmuch as folklore had never before seriously been considered an appropriate subject matter for copyright protection, certainly not by a powerful international authority. The poor old women in the spinning room did not fit the mold of the beneficiaries of intellectual property, whose merit is measured by the originality of their "works." Needless to say, granting such protection to the constant muse would immediately have cast doubt on the rights acquired by countless individual authors in works inspired by folklore. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the proposal to afford international protection to folklore met with skepticism. At the end of the day, it was not adopted. In fact, the entire Stockholm conference was a debacle; one participant described it as "the worst experience in the history of international copyright conventions."[37] Nevertheless, the debate over folklore left its mark on the Berne Convention. That mark is found in the opaque fourth paragraph added to article 15 in Stockholm in 1967:

> In the case of unpublished works where the identity of the author is unknown, but where there is every ground to presume that he is a national of a country of the Union, it shall be a matter for legislation in that country to designate the competent authority who shall

> represent the author and shall be entitled to protect and enforce his rights in the countries of the Union.[38]

This paragraph was drafted by the working group that examined the possibility of adding a provision on folklore to the Berne Convention. Members of that group had found folklore "to be extremely difficult to define":

> Hence the provision applies to all works fulfilling the conditions indicated above. It is clear, however, that the main field of application of this regulation will coincide with those productions which are generally described as folklore.[39]

The exact formulation of article 15(4) merits scrutiny. Think about it: so indivisible is copyright from norms of authorship that the Berne Convention can conceive of traditional expression only as the work of an "unknown author." In other words, by this reckoning it is not so much the case that H. C. Andersen repeated stories from oral tradition as that oral storytellers repeat the original compositions of Andersen's colleagues in the authors' guild, whose names the vagaries of history have separated from the stories that they composed.

This is symptomatic: the concept of creative agency that underpins modern regimes of intellectual property is modeled on solitary genius. Canonized in international law in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this Romantic norm has little patience for cultural processes or with expressions developed in a more diffuse, incremental, and collective manner, where it is impossible to fix specific steps like invention or authorship at a given point in time or to assign them to one particular person.

Article 15(4) further stipulates: "It shall be a matter for legislation in that country to designate the competent authority which shall represent the author and shall be entitled to protect and enforce his rights in the countries of the Union." After recasting folklore in terms that are legible under copyright regimes, the special working group in Stockholm realizes that something has been lost in translation. They had cast creative agency

in traditional expression in the mold of the universal individual subject – the unpublished works of an unknown author. The result was a legal subject with no recourse to representation because it is as void of a real reference as the empty subject "it" in the phrase "it's raining." The Convention therefore goes on immediately to fill that empty subject with the will of the state, "which shall represent the author."

The Berne Convention illustrates the relationship between copyright and folklore. The paradox that ties the one to the other, while keeping them always apart, has been the ongoing concern of WIPO since at least 1967, three years before it was founded. The latest in the series of such efforts, WIPO's Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore, has been meeting in Geneva since 2001 to draft an international convention in the field.[40] The problem at the heart of its work is that the system of intellectual property protection, which is supposed to encourage creativity and innovation, systematically excludes the knowledge and creativity of a large portion of humanity.

I have tracked this WIPO committee over a dozen years and carried out fieldwork at many meetings. As a folklorist I am partial to good stories and of these there are plenty at WIPO. Success stories and narratives of misappropriation are offered as anecdotal evidence to support particular positions. These stories concern traditional music and medicinal knowledge, narratives and dance, as well as traditional patterns and designs. Their common plotline concerns the clash between tradition and originality, between folklore and authorship, between community and individual, and between private property and the public domain.[41] Music and medicine are the most hotly debated arenas in WIPO's committee because that is where the money is, in two top-dollar industries with a large profit-margin: the pharmaceutical industry and the world-music industry. Both base their profits on intellectual property rights, and both spend lavishly on legal departments that defend their rights and on lobbyists who extend their rights. When it comes to the collective resources they exploit, however, traditional knowledge and traditional music, there is no one to represent the other side. The constant muse cannot retain a lawyer.[42]

In order to qualify for copyright protection, a narrative, a design, or a piece of music has to be an original creation. Likewise, in order to be granted patent protection, technology and know-how need to pass the test of novelty and involve an inventive step. By means of such criteria, traditional knowledge and expressions are ruled out on principle. No one is entitled to speak for tradition. It is impossible to make a claim to represent it in a way that is legible and logical within the legal regime of copyright.

One of the enduring legacies of the Brothers Grimm and their contemporaries lies in how they mapped out the domain of collective creativity. Their work inscribed that domain on the scholarly agenda, and through the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* and countless collections that followed in its wake they helped to make its existence self-evident. It is best understood as a domain within a new discursive regime whose figure is the author. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a legal regime took shape that complemented this discursive regime: the law of copyright. In this context, we may say that the Grimms helped give a shape to these regimes by devising an instrument (sharper than a letter opener, duller than a scalpel) for carving the discursive field up into authored works on the one hand and non-authored texts on the other.

In order to understand the paradox at the heart of the disputes in WIPO's committee, it is helpful to go back to the time of Herder, the Grimms, their colleagues and contemporaries, and to their legacy, for ultimately the negotiations in Geneva surf on waves that they helped to set in motion – the "Grimm ripples." In country after country and language after language, these ripples helped reproduce the outlines of the discursive domain of folklore, filling this new category with content in the vernacular, rooting it in national soil, and rendering it relevant for legal practice in state after state. The purpose of the genealogical approach I propose is to uncover layers of past meanings in concepts that have been invested with power through the institution of authorship and the copyright regime. In studying paradoxes posed by the convergence of copyright and folklore, I intend to show how the former has been constituted through the exclusion of the latter.

The concept of creative agency that underpins regimes of intellectual property is based originally on the European fantasy of the melancholy

poet or the solitary inventor whose works are completely original. That is a fairy tale in its own right. This Romantic authorship norm is intimately associated with the rise of capitalism. Its historical emergence coincides with the liberalization of the book trade in Europe and the invention of copyright. In England, for example, a system of strict censorship was put in place when the printing press first arrived. Under the Licensing of the Press Act from 1662 (the last of many), the Stationer's Company had a monopoly on publishing and was made responsible for enforcing that monopoly. Only members of the Company could produce books, and once a member of the Company claimed ownership of a text, no other member was allowed to publish it.

This licensing system was replaced in the eighteenth century by a market system. Instead of total monopoly being vested in a few publishers, any publisher could now claim a limited monopoly right in a particular book for a restricted period of time. Invoking this new right, the printer could prevent others from copying the book for a given number of years (the number was fourteen years to begin with). At the end of that period, the protection expires and the work enters the public domain, which means anyone is free to copy it, distribute it, and use it at will.[43]

The public domain did not pre-date copyright. It is not as if before the age of copyright, anyone could print anything. Rather, the public domain came into being with the law of copyright and through the law of copyright. Before copyright laws, the right to copy any and all books in Britain belonged exclusively to printers in the Stationer's Company: There was no public domain.

Moreover, when laws on copyright and author's rights were formulated toward the end of the eighteenth century, first in Britain, then in France, the German states, and the United States, legislators imposed limits on the kind of work eligible for protection. These limits were measured by the criterion of originality, and they were entangled with an ideal of authorship that was beginning to emerge in this era. The law of copyright placed in the public domain all works that did not fit the individual author-concept of the time and did not measure up to the criterion of originality: this included tales and ballads that men of learning had begun to collect from popular tradition in this same period – for after all this is also when Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and Macpherson's

Works of Ossian (1760–5) first saw the light of day and Herder's *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (1778/9–1807) swept across the European continent.[44] The Grimms followed with the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812–15), and their colleagues all over Europe cranked out volume after volume of tales, legends, and folklore that nobody owned, traditional grist for the mill of national book industries, circulating in the free textual markets of European states. They wound up on the bookshelves of bourgeois parlors and nurseries, where they became vehicles of social imagination for the emerging middle classes, through contrastive reading practices that transported them down the social ladder to the cotter's dooryard, from where the texts supposedly came, and upward, to the palaces and castles of a nobility to which the reading audience considered itself the natural heirs.

The works were easily reproduced in countless new editions in part because they were in the public domain – no one claimed proper authorship. The invention of the public domain relates directly to the invention of folklore as a category and concept. Folklore and the public domain have been related from the outset – interdependent, coeval, and to a considerable degree co-extensive. This is where the Grimms come in. Their collections, and the collections they inspired, gave substance to the new category of popular tradition and content to the public domain, content that was qualitatively different from authored texts that went out of copyright after a certain number of years, or from classical and ancient texts that predated the copyright regime by a millennium or two (two and a half in the case of Homer). The folktales and legends the Grimms published and the publications that their work gave rise to were not in the public domain because of *when* they had been published, but because of *how* they were thought to have been created.

Folklore, in fact, came to be defined as such only with reference to norms of originality and ownership intrinsic to authorship and the intellectual property regime. A critical genealogy allows us to understand folklore as a constitutive outside of authorship. Folklore is the non-authored. Better yet, it is the anti-authored. It circumscribes the discursive domain of authorship and defines the criterion of originality. Without folklore, no authorship – or at least it would not have the contours we know and recognize.

Folklore might be described as a residual concept. It is brought into being through the formation of authorship and subjectivity, in much the same way as the public domain was brought into being through the formation of intellectual property – as its residue, its precondition, and its product. The formation of folklore as a discursive category is thus to be sought in the rise of possessive individualism in the expressive sphere. To be precise, popular tradition is the remainder of the author concept.

The distinction between authorship and folklore, and the distinction between intellectual property and the public domain, go hand in hand, of course, with social standing and the division of wealth, within society and between societies. The author came into his own as a reflex of the rise of the European bourgeoisie and the ascendance of the bourgeois universal subject. While Romantics elevated bourgeois authors (as well as aristocratic ones, even the odd social climber like Andersen) to the rank of original geniuses and ratified their private ownership over their works, they also coined concepts like “folktales” and “folksongs” to refer to texts supposedly circulating among common people, which, in contrast to novels and books of poetry, were recycled, unauthored, and not owned by anyone.

Thus, creativity and originality were the prerogative of the bourgeoisie, while the masses could only transmit the songs and tales of earlier generations. The art of common people consisted of copies – flawed copies, at that. It took bourgeois authors to create original works of art out of these artless texts of popular tradition: *Kunstpoesie* from *Naturpoesie*; *Kunstmärchen* from *Volksmärchen*. Recall the epigraph from Goethe that Andersen quoted on the title page of his first published fairy tale: “Fairy tales full of wonder still / the poet’s art with truth can fill.” Originality entitled authors to property rights, whereas the recycled poetry of commoners belonged to no one in particular and was there for the taking.

Folklorists went so far as to posit elite origins for popular tradition, arguing that folksongs and the like had been composed by men of refined taste and good breeding before sliding down the social ladder to commoners who preserved them in bastardized versions. This assumption underpinned many of the critical readings and reconstruction projects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which tried to peel away the

popular accretions to the original work: to undo the damage, to ennoble the texts, or to re-ennoble them. It was taken to its logical conclusion by Hans Naumann in the 1920s in his theories about "gesunkenes Kulturgut," and the wonderfully bizarre concept of "zersingen," which assumes that oral transmission is ultimately destructive of folklore – that each version of a song is inferior to the previous one, and what ultimately happens is that common folk sing these once noble songs to shreds.[45]

Such theories rationalized the bourgeois claim to folk culture, as well as the scholarly task of reconstruction. They created room for the collector and editor to intervene and consolidated their discursive authority in the domain of folklore. By the end of the nineteenth century, the European bourgeoisie was gaining hegemony in the cultural field and was presenting itself as the natural heir to high culture. If folklore was noble in its origins, it too was theirs to collect, to edit, to interpret, to publish, and to read – their symbolic capital. The Berne Convention's notion of an "unknown author" for folklore fits well with such theories. Uniting them is a narrow concept of creative agency and disdain for the cultural production of lower social classes.

The theory of *gesunkenes Kulturgut* was one side in a debate that still surfaces regularly.[46] The other side of this debate has been dominant since the end of the nineteenth century, and it dismissed the search for an absolute point of origin in favor of a theory of gradual adaptation through imperfect imitation. This theory is captured in the succinct formula that the American folklorist Phillipps Barry coined in 1915: "individual origins and communal re-creation."[47]

Barry's formula reworks that of Swiss folklorist Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, who, in 1903, wrote: "The 'soul of the folk' [Volksseele] does not produce, it reproduces."[48] If we cross Hoffmann-Krayer with Antonio Gramsci, and we substitute the neo-Marxian concept of subalternity for the neo-Herderian "Volksseele," we have, I think, a rather accurate representation of the hegemonic view of cultural production among subordinate groups: *The subaltern do not produce, they reproduce*.

This applies not only to European peasants, of course, but also to other categories of subalterns – women, for instance. In fact, the phrase aptly captures the role assigned to women in the bourgeois household, bearing

and raising children and nurturing the family, while the man of the house ventures into the public arena to carry out productive work. Women do not produce, they reproduce; that was their function within the ideological order. In the cultural domain, they were charged with reproducing national culture, safeguarding it, as it were, by embodying it and passing it on to children – the mother tongue, folktales, lullabies, foodways, and customs. They were closer to nature than men, defined by their bodies and emotions rather than their intellect, their procreative powers rather than their creative originality. In the bourgeois imagination, peasants, women, and children merge. They all fall short of the ideal of the universal individual subjecthood to which modern man aspires, for which the original author was the ultimate icon. They are remaindered by it; they are the constitutive outside in contrast to which the universal subject was defined – as adult, male, bourgeois, and individual.

It is not by accident that the Berne Convention always refers to the author as masculine. Thus article 15(4) regulates unpublished works by an unknown author "where there is every ground to presume that *he* is a national of a country of the Union" and the "competent authority which shall represent the author…shall be entitled to protect and enforce *his* rights."[49] Lurking beneath the author's grammatical gender in the Berne Convention is the notion of literary paternity integral to copyright law. The so-called "right to paternity" refers to an author's right to claim authorship in his work and to have his authorship duly acknowledged in any publication. Paternity was the most common figure used to represent the author's relationship to his writing in the early modern period, as Mark Rose has shown, and in spite of its awkward fit with the liberalized market in books (in which the author sells his "brainchild") paternity remains one of the two principal figures (along with real estate) to describe the author-work relation in copyright terms.[50] The metaphor figures the creative process of literary paternity as parthenogenetic. Rehearsing the original divine act of creation, the author creates an original work out of nothing; he is the sole creator of his literary offspring brought forth in a single act of creation.[51] This asexual form of creation has no use for difference; it disregards the social dimension of creativity and forecloses the possibility of distributing creative agency. Social creativity – collective, cumulative, sexual – is banished from the domain of works of authorship as the regime

of authorship carved up the discursive field. Such alternative forms of creative agency were relegated to the residual domain of folklore.

In their reading of literary paternity, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar note that "because he is an *author*, a 'man of letters' is simultaneously, like his divine counterpart, a father, a master or ruler, and an owner: the spiritual type of a patriarch."[52] The author's pen is portrayed, in their words, as "an instrument of generative power like his penis."[53] In the dominant understanding of creativity in the nineteenth century, then, men penned original works; they ruled in the domain of authorship. The place of women was in the constitutive outside of that domain, in its residue: folklore. Women were portrayed not as authors but as gossips.[54] Their artistry was oral, not literary; they did not create originals, they copied and repeated.

Women, children, and peasants all come together in the folktale as modeled in the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*: the tale culled from its peasant sources and told in the bourgeois nursery, in the heart of the private sphere, the dominion of women, by a mother or better yet by a grandmother to a group of children. The peasants are naïve and childlike, and so are women. Children are governed by their emotions and defined by their bodies much as women and peasants were portrayed. This imagery is the product of a paternalistic and patriarchal relationship to the subaltern.

All three subaltern groups are imagined collectively, rather than individually: unlike the authors of the time, and unlike the editors of folktale collections, storytellers are rarely mentioned by name by the Grimms or in other collections surfing on the Grimm ripples. Storytellers figure always as collective sources. At most the area where they live is mentioned. Yet we are led to assume their class and often their gender.

There is an important exception that illustrates this rule. We owe it to the Grimms. Not only did they map the domain of collective creativity, they illustrated the creative agency in that domain; they gave a face to the constant muse. The face of the folk from whom the tales emanate is the face of Dorothea Viehmann, as the Grimms presented her to their readers in the second volume of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*:

> One of those happy pieces of good fortune was the acquaintance with a peasant woman from the village of Zwehrn near Kassel. Through her we acquired a good part of the tales published here along with a number of additions to the first volume. They can therefore be counted as genuinely Hessian. This woman, still vigorous and not much over fifty, is called Viehmann. She has a firmly set, pleasant face with bright, clear eyes and was probably beautiful when she was young. She has these stories clearly in mind, a gift which she says is not given to everyone. Many people cannot memorize anything at all. She narrates carefully, confidently, and in an unusually lively manner, taking great pleasure in it.[55]

As Heinz Rölleke points out, the Grimms tailored Dorothea Viehmann to suit an idealized image of their contributors, the image that their readers were to carry away with them.[56] Literally so, as her portrait illustrated the second volume of the tales starting with the second edition of 1819, drawn by the third brother, Ludwig Emil Grimm (Figure 1.1).[57] That Dorothea Viehmann was in fact the wife of a tailor and came from a Huguenot family hardly matters in this context, nor that many of their other sources were young ladies from the middle classes.

Figure 1.1 Portrait of Dorothea Viehmann, drawn by Ludwig Emil Grimm for the 1819 edition of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*.

Viehmann's portrait and description struck a chord. When Edgar Taylor translated the Grimms' tales into English, he published, in addition to the complete *German Popular Stories*, a selection that he called *Gammer Grethel*.[58] Pictured on the frontispiece (Figure 1.2), old Grethel was none other than Dorothea Viehmann, her features slightly softened, whom Taylor had turned into the source for all the tales and describes as "an honest good-humoured farmer's wife who, a while ago, lived far off in Germany" and "knew all the good stories that were told in that country."[59] With echoes of Scheherazade in Taylor's frame narrative, Grethel tells the stories in the book on twelve successive evenings.[60]

GAMMER GRETHEL;

OR

GERMAN FAIRY TALES,

AND

POPULAR STORIES,

FROM THE COLLECTION OF MM. GRIMM,

AND OTHER SOURCES; WITH

ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES.

LONDON:

JOHN GREEN, 121, NEWGATE STREET.

MDCCCXXXIX.

Figure 1.2 Frontispiece and title page of the book *Gammer Grethel; or, German Fairy Tales and Popular Stories*, 1839.

Viehmann died near the end of 1815, but over the next century her name and her image traveled with the Grimms' tales around the world and became synonymous with folk tradition. It helped, of course, that she was already well known, if by another name. Dorothea Viehmann so easily transformed into Gammer Grethel because the Grimms presented her as an idealized storyteller. The ideal went back at least as far as Perrault's 1697 *Contes de ma mère l'Oye*. Mother Goose, an older woman in peasant clothing, is pictured in Perrault's frontispiece with "well-groomed and wide-eyed children…gathered around her, evidently hanging on her every word" (Figure 1.3).[61] This illustration, as Maria Tatar shows, "stood model for countless other frontispieces to nineteenth-century collections of fairy tales."[62]

Figure 1.3 Frontispiece by Antoine Clouzier for the 1697 edition of Perrault's *Contes de ma mère l'Oye: Histoires ou contes du temps passés, avec des moralités*.

The frontispieces picture the constant muse. Thus, when H. C. Andersen credits the poor old women in the spinning room with revealing to him a world as rich as that of the *Thousand and One Nights*, he is drawing on and inscribing himself into a time-worn tradition, no less so than when he writes his version of "Little Claus and Big Claus" or "The Princess on the Pea." Like Andersen's old women, Perrault's Mother Goose is seated by a spindle, and so are countless anonymous storytellers pictured in fairy-tale collections in the nineteenth century (and to this day). In Tatar's words, "an elderly, careworn peasant woman with a spindle or spinning wheel by her side and a cluster of attentive youngsters at her feet becomes the visual entry point to the world of printed fairy tales."[63] Thus magical transformation carries over from folklore into meta-folklore: Mother

Goose becomes Dorothea Viehmann becomes Gammer Grethel becomes Märchenmütterchen, and so on.[64] By the time Andersen reminisces about the spinning room, in his 1847 autobiography, the poor, old woman with the spindle is already a ubiquitous icon in fairy-tale literature.

If Dorothea Viehmann is one of many avatars of Mother Goose, she is no doubt the one best known by name. In 1819, her face in Ludwig Grimm's frontispiece was still in part her own, that of the woman in Niederzwehren whom he had sketched in 1814, a year after the brothers came into contact with her. But in 1837, two years before Taylor published *Gammer Grethel*, a legend appeared in large print below her portrait in the third edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. The legend was only one word: *Märchenfrau*. This transformation from the individual to the generic is the birthmark of the constant muse. She is constant because she is dehistoricized. She is a muse because she is denied creative agency.

Viehmann became the face of the public domain. As such, she is the counterpart to the author who represents all that she does not (Figure 1.4, in comparison with Figure 1.1): who is male, not female; bourgeois or indeed noble, not a peasant; educated, not simple; cosmopolitan, not parochial; original, not a faithful imitator, skilled only in reproducing tradition. Above all, the author is an individual, not a face merely standing in for a collective.

Figure 1.4 Karl Joseph Stieler's portrait of Goethe, *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe im 80. Lebensjahr*, 1828.

Katzenstein's fabulous image from 1892 (Figure 1.5) juxtaposes Ludwig Grimm's frontispiece of Viehmann with a famous portrait of the Brothers Grimm and embeds both in a stock scene from visual meta-folklore: the scientific collectors, scholars, and editors are portrayed face to face with the folk, sitting in Dorothea Viehmann's home and hanging on her every word, surrounded by well-behaved children and poultry, both listening eagerly.[65] These editors occupy an interesting position in between the folk

and the author, in the interstices between two discursive domains; one might say in the wound opened up by their division, by the rupture between tradition and modernity. The collector-editor is a certified translator between these domains. He is an adventurer traveling into the hinterlands of tradition to cull its last remaining treasures and carry them back across the ontological borders of modernity.

Figure 1.5 Portrait of the Grimms visiting Dorothea Viehmann, published in *Die Gartenlaube* in 1892. The artist is Ludwig Katzenstein and the title of the portrait is *Die Brüder Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm bei der Märchenerzählerin Frau Viehmann in Niederzwehren.*

In fact the historical Dorothea Viehmann paid visits to the Grimms and not the other way around. She was the border-crossing adventurer. As far as we know they never set a foot in her home.[66] As Willem de Blécourt has noted, Katzenstein's illustration "reflects late nineteenth-century opinion on the activities of the Grimms."[67] Its inverted representation of historical events speaks to the stability of the discursive regime of authorship by the end of the nineteenth century, how firmly the positions of the folk, the author, and the collector-editor had settled by then.

A genealogy such as the one I have sketched out allows us to investigate the various systems of subjection hidden in plain view in legal and discursive regimes; to uncover layers of past meanings in concepts

invested with power through the institution of authorship and the intellectual property regime. In so doing, we shed critical light on normative understandings of creativity that control the circulation of culture and open the door to alternative ways of conceiving creative agency, beyond the figures of the author and the folk.

In an age of file sharing and peer-to-peer networking, of social software and web 2.0, of mashups and remixes, Wikipedia and YouTube, we need a new language to speak of creative agency. Historically, folklore offered an alternative to authorship: folklore is peer-to-peer, it is collaborative, and it is collective. But the choice between these two options is not satisfactory; we should not accept it uncritically. Hence my attempt to undermine the dichotomies reified in dominant understandings of creativity, to help imagine creative agency differently and to think in other terms about creative processes that are collaborative, incremental, and distributed in space and time.

Such creative processes are in fact all around us. They are the norm, not the exception. How many people do you imagine wrote that text on the back of your cereal box? Designed the graphic illustration? How many people did it take to create the movie you watched last night? The language of folklore often captures creative processes and products more accurately than the language of authorship. Neither is accurate, however. Each is based on the exclusion of the other. To construct a new language, we need first to understand the discursive grid we are revising so we do not wind up reproducing the same old discursive antagonisms with merely a new vocabulary. We need an alternative grammar of creativity and a renewed understanding of how cultural expressions circulate.

Here is a final thought: How about the collector-editor? Could we model a new understanding of creative agency on the figure of the folklorist? Notwithstanding the immodesty of such a proposal, what possibilities would such an understanding open up? What new perspectives? What if every cultural actor, individual or collective, is acting like the Brothers Grimm when they compiled the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*? The rapper, the storyteller, the singer, the author, the programmer, the poet, the mashupping contributor to YouTube, the guy cracking jokes at the office party, the student writing a Facebook status in class – everyone, that is? What if we think of culture as a republic of editors – some more (adamant

about faithful reproduction or scholarly reconstruction) like Jacob, and others more (inclined to artistic elaboration) like Wilhelm?

We would be taking away from authorship and folk tradition their powerful hold on our imagination because their power depends on their dichotomous relation. By reframing the intermediate position as the central category we challenge the untenable dichotomy that still channels our understanding of creative agency. In redefining the borderlands as the center, we define the author and the folk as peripheral concepts, as exceptions rather than norms, or, better yet, as labels on either end of a spectrum, with most texts falling not at either end but somewhere in between. And the in between is the domain of the collector-editor.

This is one perspective on creativity and on the circulation of culture. As such it is neither true nor false, only helpful or unhelpful. It might not have flattered Andersen, but the curious case of the fairy tales that Andersen composed decades after he first heard them in the spinning room makes more sense if we consider their historical trajectories and transformations as a series of editorial interventions.

In 1977, folklorist Alan Dundes asked: “Who are the folk?” His answer is still radical and it still rings true: “Among others, we are!”[68] Taking a cue from Dundes, we might now ask: Who are the Grimms? In logical conclusion to the argument of this chapter, we might answer: Among others, we are! But so is everybody else.[69]

Notes

1 Hans Christian Andersen, *H. C. Andersens dagbøger 1825–1975*, ed. Kåre Olsen and H. Topsøe Jensen (Copenhagen: Det danske sprog- og litteraturselskab / C. A. Reitzels forlag, 1971–7), vol. X, 93; my translation.

2 *H. C. Andersens eventyr: Kritisk udgivet efter de originale eventyrhæfter med varianter*, ed. Erik Dal (Copenhagen: Det danske sprog-

og litteraturselskab / C. A. Reitzels forlag, 1963–90), vol. VI, 19; my translation.

3 Else Marie Kofod, *De vilde svaner og andre folkeeventyr: Sidestykker til syv af H. C. Andersen's eventyr* (Copenhagen: Foreningen Danmarks Folkeminders, 1989), 41–2, 168–70.

4 Antti Aarne, Stith Thompson, and Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography*, Folklore Fellows Communications, 3 vols. (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004), ATU 1415.

5 Quoted in Helge Topsøe-Jensen, *Buket til Andersen: Bemærkninger til femogtyve eventyr* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1971), 220; my translation.

6 E. Rosenberg, "Æsthetisk Literatur: Oversigt," *Dansk Maanedsskrift*, 1 (1861): 450; my translation.

7 Donald Haase, "Yours, Mine or Ours? Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and the Ownership of Fairy Tales," *Merveilles & Contes*, 7 (1993): 383–402.

8 See e.g., Cay Dollerup, *Tales and Translation: The Grimm Tales from Pan-Germanic Narratives to Shared International Fairytales*. Benjamins Translation Library, 30 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 1999), 293.

9 *Ibid*., 353.

10 *Ibid*., 351.

11 *Ibid*.; see, however, JoAnn Conrad, "'This Is What Trolls Really Look Like': The Folklore that Is Norway," in *News from Other Worlds: Studies*

in Nordic Folklore, Mythology and Culture, ed. Merrill Kaplan and Timothy Tangherlini (Berkeley: North Pinehurst Press, 2012), 290–316.

12 Terry Gunnell, "Clerics as Collectors of Folklore in Nineteenth-Century Iceland," *Arv: Nordic Yearbook of Folklore*, 68 (2012): 45–66.

13 Andersen, *H. C. Andersens eventyr*, vol. VI, 4.

14 Hans Christian Andersen, *The True Story of My Life: A Sketch*, trans. Mary Howitt (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1847), 8–9.

15 "Märchen, noch so wunderbar, / Dichterkünste machen's wahr"; Johan de Mylius, "Orality: Reinvented or Invented," n.d., www2.lingue.unibo.it/acume/acumedvd/Essays%20ACUME/DeMylius.pdf (retrieved August 14, 2013); my translation. See also Terence Cave, *Mignon's Afterlives: Crossing Cultures from Goethe to the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 58.

16 Hans Christian Andersen, *Eventyr, fortalte for Børn*, Første Samling, Første Hefte (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1835), 42; translation in Hans Christian Andersen, *Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales: A Selection*, trans. L. W. Kingsland (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 29; cf. Maria Tatar, ed., *The Annotated Hans Christian Andersen* (New York: Norton, 2007), 76–7. The Danish original reads "See, det var en rigtig Historie!"; "en rigtig Historie" has variously been translated as "a true story" or "a real story," and in this context "rigtig" could also be translated as "genuine" or "authentic." In all cases it echoes the phrase "en rigtig Prindsesse" in the previous sentence; the prince married her as he now knew he had found a true/real/genuine/authentic princess. However, one could translate "wahr" in Goethe's couplet with the same English terms: what the poet's art adds to the folktale, according to Goethe, may be translated as truth, reality, genuineness, or authenticity. For a discussion of the English translations of "The Princess on the Pea," see Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen, *Ugly Ducklings? Studies in the English Translations of Hans Christian*

Andersen's Tales and Stories (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2004), 242.

17 Hans Christian Andersen, *Eventyr, fortalte for Børn*, Første Samling, Tredie Hefte (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1837), 19–20. Translation in Hans Christian Andersen, *The Complete Fairy Tales and Stories*, trans. Erik Christian Haugaard (New York: Anchor Books, 1974), 1069–70.

18 Christine Shojaei Kawan, "The Princess on the Pea: Andersen, Grimm and the Orient," *Fabula*, 46 (2005): 89. Cf. Arthur Christensen, "La Princesse sur la feuille de myrte et la princesse sur le pois," *Acta Orientalia*, 14 (1936): 241–57.

19 Shojaei Kawan, "The Princess on the Pea," 102. On the relationship of Hans Christian Andersen's tales to folk tradition in general, see Ingvild Alnæs, "H. C. Andersen og folkeeventyrene," *Andersenania*, 3rd series, 2 (1974–7): 97–119; Georg Christensen, "H. C. Andersen og de danske folkeeventyr," *Danske studier*, 3 (1906): 103–12, 161–74; Bo Grønbech, "Weltbild und Kunst in den Märchen von H. C. Andersen," in *Folk Narrative and World View*, ed. Ingo Schneider and Petra Streng (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), vol. I, 219–26; Bengt Holbek, "Hans Christian Andersen's Use of Folktales," *Merveilles & Contes*, 4 (1990): 220–32; Niels Ingwersen, "'I Do Not Understand Anything,' Andersen Said," in *Hans Christian Andersen: A Poet in Time. Papers from the Second International Hans Christian Andersen Conference 29 July to 2 August 1996*, ed. Johan de Mylius, Aage Jørgensen, and Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen (Odense University Press, 1999), 451–60; Kofod, *De vilde svaner og andre folkeeventyr*; and Karin Pulmer, "Vom Märchenglück zum Bürgeridyll: Zu H. C. Andersens Volksmärchenbearbeitungen," *Skandinavistik: Zeitschrift für Sprache, Literatur und Kultur der nordischen Länder*, 10 (1980): 104–17.

20 Brothers Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen: Ausgabe letzter Hand mit den Originalanmerkungen der Brüder Grimm*, ed. Heinz Rölleke (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980), vol. III, 541. Cf. Shojaei Kawan, "The Princess on the Pea," 104.

21 Jean-Michel Adam and Ute Heidmann, “Réarranger des motifs, c’est changer le sens: Princesses et petits pois chez Andersen et Grimm,” in *Contes: L’Universel et le singulier*, ed. André Petitat (Lausanne: Payot, 2002), 155–74. See also Shojaei Kawan, “The Princess on the Pea.”

22 Hans Christian Andersen, letter sent to Jonas Collin from Berlin, July 26, 1844, in *H. C. Andersens Brevveksling med Jonas Collin den Ældre og andre Medlemmer af det Collinske Hus* (Copenhagen: E. J. Munksgaard, 1945–8), vol. I, 365; my translation.

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.* We might note in passing that Jacob Grimm paid a visit to Andersen in Copenhagen within a couple of weeks of this unhappy occasion and over the next years Andersen and the Brothers Grimm became good friends. As Andersen later recalls in *The True Story of My Life*, “I saw these two highly-gifted and amiable brothers almost daily; the circles into which I was invited seemed also to be theirs, and it was my desire and pleasure that they should listen to my little stories, that they should participate in them, they whose names will be always spoken as long as the German *Volksmärchen* are read.” From Andersen, *The True Story of My Life*, 154; cf. Elias Bredsdorff, *Hans Christian Andersen 1805–75: The Story of His Life and Work* (London: Phaidon, 1975), 171.

25 I would like to thank Cyrille François for originally drawing my attention to Andersen’s grievance about the Grimms’ publication of “The Pea Test.”

26 Inger Dübeck, “Ophavsret i 250 år,” *Ugeskrift for Retsvæsen*, 7 (1991): 155–61.

27 Helle Porsdam, *Copyright and Other Fairy Tales: Hans Christian Andersen and the Commodification of Creativity* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2006), 4.

28 *Andersens Brevveksling*, vol. I, 283; translation in Porsdam, *Copyright and Other Fairy Tales*, 7.

29 Quoted in Bredsdorff, *Hans Christian Andersen 1805–75*, 267.

30 Shojaei Kawan, "The Princess on the Pea," 104.

31 Porsdam, *Copyright and Other Fairy Tales*, 8.

32 Sam Ricketson, *The Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works: 1886–1986* (London: Centre for Commercial Law Studies, Queen Mary College / Kluwer, 1987), 39–80. See also Arpad Bogsch, "The First Hundred Years of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works," *Copyright*, 22 (September 1986): 295–6.

33 Rami Olwan, *Intellectual Property and Development: Theory and Practice* (Berlin: Springer, 2013), 43–4.

34 Eva Hemmungs-Wirtén, "Colonial Copyright, Postcolonial Publics: The Berne Convention and the 1967 Stockholm Diplomatic Conference Revisited," *SCRIPTed*, 7, 3 (December 2010): 537.

35 See Ricketson, *The Berne Convention*, 81–125; Hemmungs-Wirtén, "Colonial Copyright"; Bogsch, "The First Hundred Years," 296–8; Olwan, *Intellectual Property and Development*, 43–7; and Nebila Mezghani, "The Interplay Between the Berne Convention and the Developing Countries in the Evolution of Copyright," *Copyright*, 22 (May 1986): 184–91.

36 Ricketson, *The Berne Convention*, 314; see also Daphne Zografos, *Intellectual Property and Traditional Cultural Expression* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2010), 12–13; and *Records of the Intellectual Property Conference of Stockholm, June 11 to July 14, 1967* (Geneva: WIPO, 1971), vol. II, 296.

37 Quoted in Hemmungs-Wirtén, “Colonial Copyright,” 533.

38 *Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works*. WIPO website: Treaties and Contracting Parties: www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/berne/index.html. Retrieved August 14, 2013.

39 *Records of the Intellectual Property Conference of Stockholm*, vol. II, 307–8.

40 Stefan Groth, *Negotiating Tradition: The Pragmatics of International Deliberations on Cultural Property* (Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2012).

41 There are literally hundreds of such stories worldwide; they have been reported from China and Norway; the Solomon Islands and Ghana; Greenland and Peru; Bolivia and Bulgaria; France and New Zealand; and so on and so forth. See e.g., Michael F. Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Steven Feld, “A Sweet Lullaby for World Music,” *Public Culture*, 12, 1 (2000): 145–71; Charles McManis and Yolanda Terán, “Trends and Scenarios in the Legal Protection of Traditional Knowledge,” in *Intellectual Property and Human Development: Current Trends and Future Scenarios*, ed. Tzen Wong and Graham Dutfield (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 139–74; Dorothy Noyes, “The Judgment of Solomon: Global Protections for Tradition and the Problem of Community Ownership,” *Cultural Analysis*, 5 (2006): 27–55; Peter Shand, “Scenes from the Colonial Catwalk: Cultural Appropriation, Intellectual Property Rights, and Fashion,” *Cultural Analysis*, 3 (2002): 47–88; Tzen Wong and Claudia Fernandini, “Traditional Cultural Expressions: Preservation and Innovation,” in *Intellectual Property and Human Development: Current Trends and Future Scenarios*, ed. Tzen Wong and Graham Dutfield (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 175–217; and Rachel Wynberg, Doris Schroeder, and Roger Chennells, *Indigenous Peoples, Consent and Benefit Sharing: Lessons from the San-Hoodia Case* (New York: Springer, 2009).

42 See Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, "The Politics of Origins: Collective Creation Revisited," *Journal of American Folklore*, 117, 465 (2004): 300–15.

43 Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). See also Lyman Ray Patterson, *Copyright in Historical Perspective* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbildt University Press, 1968).

44 Susan Stewart, *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994); Martha Woodmansee, "On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity," in *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*, ed. Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 15–28.

45 Hans Naumann, "Deutsche Volkskunde," *Deutsche Pfeiler* (July 1921): 1–11. See also Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 113–18; Alan Dundes, "The Devolutionary Premise in Folklore Theory," *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 6 (1969): 5–7; and Adolf Bach, *Deutsche Volkskunde* (Heidelberg: S. Hirzl, 1937), 64–9, 435–40, 509–10.

46 A recent example is the ongoing polemic about the extent to which there is an oral tradition behind fairy tales and to what extent they may (some, most, or all) be attributed to particular authors. In his book *Tales of Magic, Tales in Print: On the Genealogy of Fairy Tales and the Brothers Grimm* (Manchester University Press, 2012), and various articles from recent years, Willem de Blécourt argues against the "horror vacui" of folk tradition and for the literary invention of fairy tales; in an article from 2011, he contends that "notions of orality appear to be for the most part theoretical projections and unsubstantiated surmises" ("Metamorphosing Men and Transmogrified Texts. Some Thoughts on the Genealogy of Fairy Tales," *Fabula*, 52 [2011]: 280–96; 280). In a different vein, but on the same general side of the debate, Ruth Bottigheimer has argued, in her *Fairy Tales: A New History* (Albany: State University of New York Press,

2009) and other books and articles, for the individual authorship of the fairy-tale genre (or that part of it to which she refers as "rise tales") and of particular fairy tales, suggesting that oral versions rarely stray far from a printed text to which they may be traced. A number of folklorists and other fairy-tale scholars have argued forcefully against these contentions and for an oral tradition interacting with the literary tradition. See also Willem de Blécourt, "On the Origin of Hänsel und Gretel. An Exercise in the History of Fairy-Tales," *Fabula*, 49 (2008): 30–46; Ruth Bottigheimer, *Fairy Godfather: Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Bottigheimer, "Fairy Tale Origins, Fairy Tale Dissemination, and Folk Narrative Theory," *Fabula*, 47 (2006): 211–21; Bottigheimer, "Fairy Godfather, Fairy-Tale History, and Fairy-Tale Scholarship: A Response to Dan Ben-Amos, Jan M. Ziolkowski, and Francisco Vaz da Silva," *Journal of American Folklore*, 123 (2010): 447–96; Bottigheimer, "Reply to the Review of *Fairy Tales: A New History*," *Journal of Folklore Research Reviews*, www.indiana.edu/~jofr/review.php?id=1350. Retrieved August 14, 2013.

For critical evaluations and responses to Bottigheimer and/or de Blécourt, see for example: Cristina Bacchilega, "Fairy Tales: A New History (Review)," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 35 (2010): 468–71; Dan Ben-Amos, "Straparola: The Revolution That Was Not," *Journal of American Folklore*, 123 (2010): 426–46; Donald Haase, "Fairy Tales: A New History (Review)," *Journal of Folklore Research Reviews* (2011), www.indiana.edu/~jofr/review.php?id=914. Retrieved August 14, 2013; Christine Shojaei Kawan, "Fairy Tale Typology and the 'New' Genealogical Method: A Reply to Willem de Blécourt," *Fabula*, 52 (2012): 297–301; Francisco Vaz da Silva, "The Invention of Fairy Tales," *Journal of American Folklore*, 123 (2010): 398–425; Jan Ziolkowski, "Straparola and the Fairy Tale: Between Literary and Oral Traditions," *Journal of American Folklore*, 123 (2010): 377–97; and Jack Zipes, "Sensationalist Scholarship: A Putative 'New' History of Fairy Tales," *Cultural Analysis*, 9 (2010): 129–55; *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (Princeton University Press, 2012).

47 Phillipps Barry, "The Transmission of Folk-Song," *Journal of American Folklore*, 27 (1914): 67–76; "Das Volk dichtet nichts," *Bulletin of the Folk-Song Society of the Northeast*, 7 (1934): 4; "The Part of the Folk Singer in the Making of Folk Balladry," in *The Critics and the Ballad*, ed. MacEdward Leach and Tristram P. Coffin (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), 59–67. See also Hafstein, "The Politics of Origins," 308–9.

48 "Die Volksseele produziert nicht, sie reproduziert"; Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, "Naturgesetz im Volksleben," *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*, 2 (1903): 57–67.

49 *Berne Convention*; my emphasis.

50 Rose, *Authors and Owners*, 38–41. See also Mark Rose, "Copyright and Its Metaphors," *UCLA Law Review*, 50 (2002): 1–12.

51 Rose, "Copyright and its Metaphors," 3–5.

52 Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edn. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 7; emphasis in original.

53 *Ibid.*, 6.

54 Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1994), 12–65.

55 Translation in Maria Tatar, ed. and trans., *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, The Bicentennial Edition (New York: Norton, 2004), 408.

56 Heinz Rölleke, "New Results of Research on *Grimm's Fairy Tales*," in *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*, ed. James M. McGlathery (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 103.

57 *Ibid.*

58 Brothers Grimm, *German Popular Stories, Translated from the Kinder- und Hausmärchen, Collected by M. M. Grimm, From Oral Tradition*, trans. Edgar Taylor (London: C. Baldwyn, 1823); Brothers Grimm, *Gammer Grethel; or German Fairy Tales and Popular Stories, from the collection of M. M. Grimm, and Other Sources; with illustrative notes*, trans. Edgar Taylor (London: John Green, 1839); Brothers Grimm, *German Fairy Tales and Popular Stories, as Told by Gammer Grethel: Translated from the collection of M. M. Grimm by Edgar Taylor* (London: H. G. Bohn, 1846).

59 Brothers Grimm, *Gammer Grethel*, xi.

60 Jennifer Schacker, *National Dreams: The Remaking of Fairy Tales in Nineteenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 13–45; and Ruth Michaelis-Jena, "Oral Tradition and the Brothers Grimm," *Folklore*, 82, 4 (Winter 1971): 271.

61 Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* (Princeton University Press, 1987), 109.

62 *Ibid.*

63 *Ibid.*

64 Willem de Blécourt, "Fairy Grandmothers: Images of Storytelling Events in Nineteenth-Century Germany," *Relief*, 4 (2010): 174–97; Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, 17–25.

65 de Blécourt, "Fairy Grandmothers," 177–82.

66 Bernard Lauer, "Dorothea Viehmann und die Brüder Grimm: Märchen und Wirklichkeit," *Märchenspiegel*, 9 (1998): 36–42.

67 de Blécourt, “Fairy Grandmothers,” 180.

68 Alan Dundes, “Who Are the Folk?” in *Frontiers of Folklore*, ed. William Bascom (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), 17–35.

69 I owe a debt of gratitude to Regina Bendix, Áki G. Karlsson, Ulrich Marzolph, Helle Porsdam, and Francisco Vaz da Silva, who read this chapter in manuscript and gave me both encouragement and very good advice (most of which I have taken), and in particular to JoAnn Conrad, who tore an early draft of the chapter to pieces and then helped me reassemble it with her constructive critique. I am thankful also to Cyrille François, who originally suggested that I look into Andersen’s complaint that the Grimms had published one of his original tales in their collection. Moreover, I want to thank Maria Tatar for her thoughtful editing of this chapter and her many excellent suggestions that helped me to improve it. As always, errors and misinterpretations are all my own.

2 Female tricksters as double agents

Maria Tatar

With the rise of warrior women in popular entertainments comes a degree of cultural anxiety about producing a new stereotype that, while disavowing the notion of princesses passively awaiting liberation, risks installing an even more disturbing archetype of female heroism. Hollywood may have moved from one extreme to another, first enshrining comatose heroines like Snow White and Sleeping Beauty, and now turning Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, and Gretel into beauties with impressive arsenals at their disposal. But the folkloric legacy reminds us that there are other options and models, in particular the mythical trickster, who navigates his way (and I use the masculine pronoun with all due deliberation) to "happily ever after" by using wits and courage rather than guns and steel.

"All the regularly discussed figures are male," Lewis Hyde tells us in his magisterial study of the culture-building feats of tricksters ranging from Hermes and Loki to Coyote and Hare. Tricky women exist, he concedes, but their acts of deception and disruptive deeds fall short of the "elaborated career of deceit" that marks the lives of those cultural heroes we know by the name of Trickster.[1]

There may be a good reason for the absence of female tricksters in the mythological imagination. The male trickster-figure is never found at home, sitting by the hearth. Driven by hunger and appetite, he is always on the road, mobile and mercurial in ways unimaginable for women in most cultures. As a boundary-crosser and traveler, trickster is adept at finding ways to gratify his multiple appetites – chiefly for food and for sex, but for spiritual satisfactions as well. He is even capable of procreation, as the Winnebago trickster named Wakdjunkaga reveals, when he changes into a woman to marry the son of a chief and bear three sons. But that trickster, like Hermes (who is sometimes depicted as a hermaphrodite), remains resolutely masculine with nothing more than the capacity to become a woman.

It may well be that trickster is, by his very nature, male, a mythological construct designed to define male appetites and desires. As the product of patriarchal mythologies, trickster's powers may simply have been reserved for male agents. But it is also possible that the female trickster has carried out her own stealth operation, functioning in furtive ways and covering her tracks to ensure that her powers remain undetected. Perhaps she has survived and endured simply by becoming invisible and flying beneath the radar that we use to understand our cultural stories. And now, in cultures that grant women the kind of mobility and subversive agency unknown in earlier ages, she can join up with the more visible postmodern female counterparts that appear in cultural production today. This chapter will trace the covert operations of a set of female trickster figures who may not have "fully elaborated" careers but who nonetheless remind us that there is a female counterpart to the mythical male trickster, one with its own set of defining features.

Gretel as escape artist

No fairy tale takes us deeper into the woods than the Grimms' "Hansel and Gretel." Its forests are compounded of dread and desire, offering a double thrill as the children face down the terrors and seductions of a house made of bread and cake, with windows of sparkling sugar, guarded by a cannibalistic host. The children are living in a time of famine. Already famished when abandoned by their father, they sustain themselves for three days with "a few berries scattered on the ground." When they discover the house in the woods, they show admirable restraint, with Hansel breaking off a "small piece of the roof" and Gretel "nibbling" on the windowpane.

The children's reserve, in the midst of a struggle for survival, has not earned them immunity to criticism. Bruno Bettelheim famously described them as victims of anxious fantasies.[2] Like small children who wake up in the middle of the night, Hansel and Gretel are "convinced that their parents plan to starve them to death!" (159). Regression and denial are the two strategies the children use to solve their problems. Carried away by their "oral craving" and "cannibalistic inclinations," they give in to "untamed id impulses, as symbolized by their uncontrolled voraciousness"

(162). Moving seamlessly from manifest content to latent meaning, Bettelheim reads the tale as a Freudian allegory about children who project all their unruly desires and fears on innocent adults. The ogre stepmother at home and the cannibalistic witch in the woods are nothing more than phantoms of the children's imaginations and projections of their own desires.

The stepmother and witch animate and ceaselessly reinvigorate the Grimms' tale, doing much to keep the story alive. The explosive cruelty of these two figures has motivated scholarly inquiries far more powerfully than the behavior of the children, and the witch in particular has provided a golden well of inspiration for artists ranging from Arthur Rackham to Paul O. Zelinsky. Greeting the children from her edible house in the dark woods, she and her abode have ensured that this story will not go away and that it continues to be re-imagined today, at the opera, on screen, and in other cultural productions, most recently Yim Pil-Sung's *Hansel and Gretel*, Khaled Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*, Christoph Hochhäusler's *Milchwald*, and Tommy Wirkola's *Hansel and Gretel: Witchhunters*.

But there is more to the story than breathtakingly scary witches and the mouth-watering baked goods surrounding them in the many illustrations that have performed the cultural work of imagining what must be both a worst-case and best-case possible scenario for any young child. The two children facing down the witch, I will argue, become models of heroic fairy-tale behavior, learning, step by step, how to survive and find a way out of the woods. In what will form a counter-argument to Bettelheim's thesis about the children's denial and regression, I want to show how they are linked, through the development of incremental knowledge in times of famine, with the classic trickster figures of folklore and mythology. Hunger and loss drive Hansel and Gretel to improvise, to discover strategies for survival, and to find a way home. Confronting the evils of parental abandonment and the threat of cannibalistic aggression, they learn how to outwit their antagonists and discover a way back home.

The two children may not appear to be capable of managing the weight-bearing duties of the mythical trickster. But in the swift narrative strokes used to draw their characters, it is not difficult to identify trickster's uncanny ability to develop creative intelligence in hard times. More

importantly, like trickster, Hansel and Gretel enact the paradox that spying, imitating, telling lies, and challenging property boundaries can not only enable survival but are also foundational for the discovery of how to do things with words and to operate in an adult culture.

The children lost in the woods have been depicted as helpless creatures at the mercy of a predatory crone. Artists like Arthur Rackham and Jessie Wilcox Smith took the lead in turning Hansel and Gretel into iconic orphaned waifs – children who do not look at all like victims of famine and adult abuse and whose dress and appearance, steeped in treacle, spare viewers the harsh realities of starvation and abandonment. And in fact, Gretel's behavior – she sits down and has a good cry on three occasions – reinforces the notion of the children's vulnerability and lack of defenses against the witch.

Yet the Grimms' Hansel and Gretel show considerable resourcefulness in a time of crisis. So hungry that they cannot sleep, they eavesdrop on their parents, overhearing the plot to abandon them in the woods. Snooping – this first phase on their path to acquiring the status of trickster – prepares them for agency, in large part because attentive curiosity is just what children need to acquire language and the ability to do things with words (to borrow J. L. Austin's famous formulation).

In the next phase of action, Hansel takes the lead, first sneaking out of the house to fill his pockets with pebbles, then pretending that he is looking back home to see his kitten when, in reality, he is dropping pebbles behind him. That the father is more than passive in plotting against the children becomes evident when we learn that he has fastened a branch to a dead tree to fool the children into thinking that they are hearing the sound of his axe when the wind knocks the branch against the tree. In this first round of matching wits, the children win by using the pebbles to find their way back home. But the stepmother will not be outsmarted, and when the famine intensifies, she persuades her husband to abandon the children once more. This time she locks the gate to the house, making it impossible for Hansel to fill his pockets with pebbles. All the boy has at his disposal is a crust of bread that he crushes in his pockets to make crumbs as markers.

Deception plays a massively important role in “Hansel and Gretel.” In the prelude to the story, children and adults engage in a game of wits and a power struggle that ends with the children at the mercy of an adult who represents a grotesquely exaggerated form of the calculating grown-up evil at home. The witch is an expert in the art of duplicity, creating an edible house and offering what Jacques Derrida called hostipitality, a dangerous form of welcome with predatory elements. The seductive house in the woods has the real purpose of luring the children into consumption so that their bodies, having incorporated elements of the host’s house, will transform them into edible guests.

In the first phase of their story, Hansel and Gretel discovered the effectiveness of lying, tricking the stepmother into thinking that Hansel is bidding farewell to his cat when in fact he is putting pebbles on the ground. When the children feast on the house, they respond to queries about their nibbling with verse attributing the sounds they are making to the wind. Both children use cunning to defeat the witch: Hansel, when he substitutes a bone for his finger, and Gretel, when she asks the witch to show her how to climb into the oven. Later, fleeing the witch’s home, they discover a body of water blocking their path, and Gretel chants:

Duckling, duckling, here is Gretel,
Duckling, duckling, here is Hansel.
No bridge or ferry far and wide –
Duckling, come, give us a ride.

The children’s strategies for survival begin with precocious listening, shade into duplicity, and end with a deadly ruse, a clever theft, and the use of art, or poetry. Just as Hermes began his career with theft and lies (stealing Apollo’s cattle and denying it when interrogated by Zeus) and ends it with charms and enchantments (he turns a tortoise shell into a lyre), so too the actions of the children in the Grimm tale mingle duplicity with art, showing how misrepresentation and appropriation are not merely survival strategies, but also the crucial first steps toward the creation of poetry, art, and other enchantments.

Beautiful lies and higher truths

Before turning to the question of Gretel's foundational role as a female trickster, it is worth considering how lying/misrepresenting functions thematically within fairy tales and also structurally as the premise on which storytelling is built. To begin with, although there has always been a certain amount of moral consternation about how fairy-tale heroes cheat their way to wealth and power, there has never been a concerted effort to understand the cultural underpinnings of lying. George Cruikshank, in a preface to his version of "Puss in Boots" entitled "To Parents, Guardians, and all Persons Entrusted with the Care of Children," revealed just how appalled he was by Perrault's version of the story. Here is how he sounded the alarm: "And then, as to 'Puss in Boots,' when I came to look carefully at that story, I felt compelled to re-write it, and alter the character of it to a certain extent; for, as it stood, the tale was a succession of successful falsehoods – a *clever* lesson in lying! – a system of *imposture* rewarded by the greatest worldly advantage! – a *useful* lesson, truly, to be impressed upon the minds of children!"[3]

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines myths as fictitious narratives invoking supernatural persons, action, or events and also as "untrue" tales. They are, as Michael Bell puts it, "supremely significant foundational stories and falsehoods."[4] The same holds true for fairy tales: Philipp Otto Runge referred to them as "lies" and the etymology of the German term *Märchen* can be traced to the word *maere*, meaning rumors and untruths. Today, of course, fairy tales can be used in two ways: first, to designate a narrative genre and, second, as a synonym for lies and fabrications, as in "that's nothing but a fairy tale."

In a supreme touch of irony, at least for Cruikshank's project, the fairy tale is a genre that self-reflexively celebrates the power of lying even as it puts forth lies in the form of higher truths with symbolic powers. "Real literature has never told the truth," Mario Vargas Llosa writes. "It has imposed lies as truths." "Homer more than any other," Aristotle wrote, "has taught the rest of us the art of framing lies the right way."[5] Fairy tale and myth, as genres that traffic in untruths, engage in the same transformative stealth action that turns the lies of their protagonists into poetry and higher truths. Misrepresenting, boundary crossing, creating

illusions, and deceiving with mimicry and masquerade transcend trickery and turn into strategies for restoring beauty and justice to the fairy-tale world.

We see this operation at work in many canonical fairy tales. There is Charles Perrault's "Puss in Boots," with its feline charlatan who incarnates Gallic wit and Cartesian cunning. He begins by trapping young rabbits, creatures "inexperienced in the ways of the world," then becomes a master liar, staging a pantomime to persuade the king that a humble miller's son is the Marquis de Carabas who owns all the land in the region. Finally, he outwits the wealthy ogre of the land by challenging him to transform himself into the smallest of animals, a mouse that he devours with gusto. Driven by hunger and poverty, Puss in Boots earns himself "through hard work and ingenuity" (as Perrault tells us – most likely tongue in cheek – in one of the two morals to the tale) a life of leisure. It seems never to have disturbed Perrault that Puss's confabulations – his studied determination to get the better of his superiors by setting traps and telling tales – might not appeal to parents. With unapologetic glee, he reports that Puss became "a great lord" and "never again had to run after mice, except when he wanted to amuse himself."[6]

Perrault had never reckoned with the likes of Cruikshank, who was equally outraged by the British "Jack and the Beanstalk," a tale that sanctions theft and fraud on a grand scale. Jack steals from the Giant with impunity, first a bag of gold, then a hen that lays golden eggs, and finally a harp that sings on its own. Despite the fact that his mother denounces him as a fool, dolt, and idiot for trading the family's cow for a set of "paltry beans," he becomes very rich and lives happily ever after. That he makes his fortune through the nimble, fancy footwork required to climb the beanstalk and earns his living by showing the golden harp links him in not so subtle ways to the fleet-footed Hermes and his lyre.

Cruikshank is appalled by "Puss in Boots" and "Jack and the Beanstalk," but he reserves his strongest condemnation for Charles Perrault's "Hop o' My Thumb," for that story models for children "artful falsehood and successful robbery." The beloved Hop o' My Thumb is denounced as "an *unfeeling, artful liar, and a thief*." Hop o' My Thumb in fact makes the most dramatic move of all fairy-tale characters from mute simple-mindedness to artful eloquence. Like Jack, he seems to be "stupid" but

turns out to be “wise” and “shrewd.” He speaks little but listens “carefully” to everything. Like Hansel, he uses pebbles to find the way back home, yet, when outsmarted by his mother, he is obliged to rely on breadcrumbs. And at the ogre’s house, he performs a substitution, exchanging the crowns on the heads of the ogre’s daughters with the caps worn by him and his brothers. The ogre is fooled and mistakenly cuts the throats of his own seven daughters in the darkness of night.

These figures seem to confirm Lewis Hyde’s declaration that tricksters are invariably male. The dramas of artifice, trickery, and deceit enacted in “Puss in Boots,” “Jack and the Beanstalk,” and “Hop o’ My Thumb” have few analogues in tales featuring female leads. But there are exceptions, and that they have faded from cultural memory should make alarm bells go off, and not just in our own heads. First there is “Finette Cendron,” written down by Mme d’Aulnoy in the seventeenth century. That tale, which constructs a heroine who is by turns Hop o’ My Thumb, Ariadne, Odysseus, and Cinderella, reminds us that literary fairy tales are to a great extent funded by motifs and themes deriving from oral traditions, high and low.

From her godmother, Finette receives a “ball of thread” that will enable her to find her way back home through the labyrinth of the winding paths in the woods. And she encounters a one-eyed ogre, a giant of a man who thinks nothing of having a dozen children for breakfast. Mme d’Aulnoy’s heroine, as her name tells us, is a cunning Cinderella, a clever girl who lives happily ever after with a king. She is akin to the Russian Vasilisa, another resourceful maiden banished to the hearth and exploited by her sisters. Vasilisa too manages to triumph in the end, in her case marrying the Tsar. The Russian heroine is in some ways more akin to Prometheus than to Odysseus, for it is she who succeeds in stealing fire from Baba Yaga and bringing it back home.

Vasilisa reminds us that Italo Calvino was on to something important when he wrote: “Through the forest of fairy tales the vibrancy of myth passes like a shudder of wind.”[7] The mythological trickster, as we shall see, becomes a boundary crosser, and in her female incarnation she is supremely irreverent about the borders separating fairy tale from myth and other fictions. Gretel, Finette Cendron, and Vasilisa have an interesting syncretic lineage that includes figures male and female, and they stand as

models, as we shall see, for a range of literary superheroes ranging from Pippi Longstocking to Katniss Everdeen and the Girl with the Dragon Tattoo.

Trickster and trickstar

Marilyn Jurich was the first to detect gender disturbances in the airwaves of folkloric meditations on tricksters. She identified and defined a female figure who operates in much the same way as the male trickster, and used the term "trickstar" to differentiate one from the other. If satisfying appetites, crossing boundaries, and shape-shifting characterize the male figure, playing tricks becomes for Jurich the hallmark of the female trickster: "Women can rescue themselves and others *through tricks*, pursue what they need or desire *through tricks*, transform what they find unworkable or unworthy *through tricks*."[8] Jurich's emphasis on how women "trick their way into more desirable positions" and "use tricks to gain advantages for their communities" can have an unsettling effect on some, for it repeatedly emphasizes deceit and duplicity almost to the exclusion of the nimble and creative intelligence associated with the male trickster.

Determined to show the distaff side of a concept that has been declared male territory, Jurich's intense focus on trickery seems at times to impoverish the notion of female tricksters rather than enrich it, as she searches relentlessly for examples of women's power to dupe, hoodwink, and outmaneuver their antagonists. Using the frame tale of the *Thousand and One Nights* as her point of departure, she suggests that Scheherazade has only one resource at her disposal to deter the king from carrying out his murderous daily assaults on the "treacherous" women of Baghdad. Scheherazade knows better than to reason, beg, plead, bargain, preach, or scold. Instead, she relies on the only strategy available to the powerless: deceit.

What I would like to set up in contrast to Jurich's notion of a female trickster who slavishly holds to her moniker is the notion of female tricksters as double agents, women who operate using strategies both subversive and transformative in order to construct their own identities but also to effect social change. Like sleuths at a detective *agency*, they

possess the ability to shape themselves even as they serve others. At times, that form of double agency is inflected in interesting ways. For example, Scheherazade, the first in a series of female trickster figures, operates at levels both culturally productive and biologically reproductive. Both creative and procreative, she sets the stage in powerful ways for the literary progeny that spring from her story.

"I will begin with a story," Scheherazade tells her sister Dinarzad, "and it will cause the king to stop his practice, save myself, and deliver the people."[9] Scheherazade's triple project is ambitious: she is seeking the king's salvation, her own release, and the protection of other women from harm. Recall that King Shahrayar has caught a wife *in flagrante* with a "black slave," and that his brother Shahzaman has suffered a similar humiliation. Both brothers are so mortified by the betrayal of their wives that they depart together in search of someone who has been even more disgraced – only then can they continue to rule. Once they encounter a *jinni* whose wife has cuckolded him five hundred and seventy times, their dignity is restored, and they return home to behead Shahrayar's wife and the slaves.

Women's duplicity seems to know no bounds, and they are positioned as so seductive, unfaithful, and treacherous that the two brothers do not have to travel far to find women even more lascivious than their own wives. Shahrayar quickly jumps to the conclusion that all women are alike and every night, for the next three years, he swears to marry "for one night only and kill the woman the next morning, in order to save himself from the wickedness and cunning of women" (12). The folkloric repertoire features a host of female counterparts to Shahrayar and his brother. The many princesses who assign tasks to suitors also take delight in beheading or punishing bunglers and incompetents. Still the tale from the *Thousand and One Nights* remains a foundational text that, like the story of Eve's betrayal and Pandora's curiosity, reminds us of the nexus linking femininity with sexual curiosity, infidelity, and deceit.

Like the merchant's daughter in our story of "Beauty and the Beast," Scheherazade volunteers to sacrifice herself and face the monster menacing the welfare of those she loves. She plans to use her storytelling prowess to delay her execution and to cure King Shahrayar of the mania that threatens to destroy his people. On each successive night,

Scheherazade tells a “strange and wonderful story,” stopping midway and finishing the following night, when she begins an even “stranger and more wonderful story.” Scheherazade is described as a scholarly type. “She had read the books of literature, philosophy, and medicine. She knew poetry by heart, had studied historical reports, and was acquainted with the sayings of men and the maxims of sages and kings. She was intelligent, knowledgeable, wise, and refined” (13).

Like Philomela in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Scheherazade is to double duty bound. She is no mere “clever survivor,” but also an agent of change. Philomela, whose body was violated and tongue severed by Tereus, weaves the story of her rape into a tapestry not only to exact revenge but also to model ways of broadcasting what has been silenced by a culture. Both Philomela and Scheherazade begin as victims, but the arc of their stories takes them to a position enabling them to speak for themselves and to a culture.

Kay Nielsen’s illustration for the frame tale to the *Arabian Nights* reminds us that Scheherazade, for all her heroic vitality, remains small and weak. Seated before the King, she is exposed literally and figuratively, the target not only of his gaze but also of his regal power. Made to appear superhuman through his oversized turban and flowing royal robes, Shahrayar may fall under the spell of Scheherazade’s stories, but he remains in charge nonetheless. More like Hestia than Aphrodite or Artemis, who stand as models for twenty-first-century tricksters, Scheherazade remains a creature of hearth and home, embracing the power of domestic ritual and renewal.

Scheherazade may lack the mobility and appetites of male tricksters, but she transcends the narrow domestic space of the bedroom through her expansive narrative reach and embraces bold defiance as she sets about remaking the values of the culture she inhabits. Behind her transformative art lurks the ruse of the disempowered, and Scheherazade, despite the physical constraints placed on her, becomes a foundational double agent whose feats establish the terms of what it means to be a female trickster.

We have seen how the folkloric imagination created a very different female trickster in the figure of Gretel, whose lies and poetry are more self-serving than world-building. Still, Gretel is a force to be reckoned

with in tracking down female tricksters shaped by a collective cultural consciousness, figures who in turn modeled some of our postmodern literary and cinematic constructions of the trickstar.

Tricksters to double duty bound

I want to begin my analysis of twenty-first-century female double agents with Lisbeth Salander, the girl with the dragon tattoo. Lisbeth, as fans of Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy will recognize, is a woman on a mission. Unlike Scheherazade, she does not use the civilizing power of story to change her culture (although one could argue that an author who begins his novel with statistics about the number of women in Sweden who have been threatened by a man does), but rather aims to exact revenge for injuries done to her and to a sisterhood of female victims.

Lisbeth's humorlessness, her almost pathological lack of affect, makes her an unlikely candidate for the role of trickstar. But like male tricksters, Lisbeth has a bottomless appetite – for food, as well as for sexual partners, both male and female. Although she is described as an "anorexic spook" by one of the novel's villains, she gorges herself endlessly, making for herself, typically, "three big open rye-bread sandwiches with cheese, caviar, and a hard-boiled egg" or "half a dozen thick sandwiches on rye bread with cheese and liver sausage and dill pickles." Constantly brewing coffee, she shovels down Billy's Pan Pizza as if eating her last meal. Consuming "every kind of junk food," she nonetheless does not seem to have an eating disorder.[10]

Gluttony is writ large in the Millennium Trilogy, and sexual appetite as well, with Salander presented as what one critic describes as a "popular culture fantasy – adolescent-looking yet sexually experienced."[11] In fact, the depictions of Salander as both abject victim of rape and partner in consensual sado-masochistic erotic practices are so explicit as to arouse the suspicion of creating a sexual spectacle designed to play into the voyeuristic desires of readers. The violence may be appalling, but it also makes the film more appealing, as the box office numbers tell us.

That Lisbeth's physical strength, as well as her technological savvy and varied appetites, are modeled on male figures becomes evident when we

learn about her superhuman strength. She is nimble and muscular enough to defeat school bullies as a child and later, as an adult, thugs twice her size in physical combat. In the second novel, we discover that Lisbeth was trained as a boxer and was once a serious competitor in male contests. Whether roaming bars or roaring off on a motorcycle, she mimics male behavior rather than shaping a unique female identity. Her appeal derives in large part from her ability to serve as an ironic double of the classic male trickster, masquerading, performing, and imitating in ways that offer both serious reenactment and gender-bending parody.

Lisbeth possesses what the author describes as “sheer magic” (31) and a “unique gift” (30). When we first “see” her, it is through the eyes of her employer, Dragan Armansky, and he describes her as one of those “flat-chested girls who might be mistaken for skinny boys at a distance” and as a “foreign creature” rather like “a painting of a nymph or a Greek amphora” (36). Like Hermes before her, she wears a cloak of “shamelessness” – Sweden’s National Board of Health and Welfare declares her to be “introverted, socially inhibited, lacking empathy, ego-fixated,” as well as exhibiting “psychopathic and asocial behaviour, difficulty in cooperating, and incapable of assimilating learning.” Exhibiting the classic traits of Asperger’s Syndrome, she is also “cunning,” and her “quick and spidery” movements and “unusual intelligence” (32) align her once again with the impudent Hermes and his folkloric kin, whose clever antics disturb boundaries and challenge property rights. A master of the World Wide Web, she has, like Anansi, her own network to administer and instrumentalize.

In a study of tricksters in film, Helena Bassil-Morozow points out that hackers feed off the “mercurial qualities of the internet,” breaking into networks and violating legislative and regulatory structures. Icily detached from moral imperatives, these “uber-nerd villains” are represented as “invisible, unnatural, elusive, unattractive, semi-transparent from lack of fresh air and exercise, people-hating creatures.”[12] Lisbeth Salander, for once, fits right in. Or does she? “Lack of emotional involvement” (32) masks Lisbeth’s deep sense of a mission to avenge rapists, murderers, and other woman-hating men – and to do good. As compensation for agreeing to keep quiet about the discovery that the now dead Martin Vanger was a serial rapist and murderer, she demands donations to the National

Organization for Women's Crisis Centres and Girls' Crisis Centres in Sweden (406), a bargain of convenience that could be turned against her as a crusader for social justice.

In ancient times, Norman O. Brown tells us, property rights were in constant crisis because of conflicts between agrarian economies on the one hand and commercial exchanges on the other. Hermes, as god of commerce, came to encapsulate the spirit of capitalist enterprise in his association with artisans and merchants. But as cattle-rustler and master of "stealth," he came to be linked with robbers and thieves as well. New conflicts and quarrels about property rights have arisen in our own time, and they center on privacy and intellectual property. It is no accident that Stieg Larsson makes his trickster heroine a hacker. In a world that enforces boundaries by technological means, Lisbeth Salander enjoys unparalleled freedom and mobility, mirroring computers, tapping telephones, and deactivating alarms, "leaving the collective magic powerless," as Lewis Hyde so aptly puts it. An expert at "unlawful data trespassing" (313), as she herself puts it, she leaves "no traces" and is able to outwit even top security consultants. Hers is a special art, and her lack of morality or conscience enables her to go about her work with a genius that makes us wonder whether her thefts are not in fact earned gifts rather than stolen goods.

As it happens, Lisbeth is most often on the wrong side of the law but on the right side of justice. She may be diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and she may be profoundly asocial, but her curiosity about the lives of others (she loves "hunting skeletons" [156]) makes it clear that she does not share all the symptoms of those with attention deficit disorder. Like Bluebeard's wife, an unacknowledged female trickster, she enjoys "digging into the lives of other people and exposing the secrets they were trying to hide" (164). It is this deep investigative bent that sets her apart from Hermes, Coyote, and Hare. Lisbeth, much as she is wedded to a world of technology, cannot resist spying and trying to read the minds of others.

As the *Oxford English Dictionary* tells us, geeks are aligned with fools and simpletons, those folkloric pranksters like Tom Thumb and Jack who perennially make good in part because their antagonists underestimate their courage and wit. Salander's intelligence, as readers of the trilogy will

recall, is perpetually underrated by teachers and social workers, who fail to recognize her genius and label her a moron. An expert in mercurial movements and adept at mimicry, she disguises herself as two different women in order to empty out bank accounts held in the name of Wennerström, the corrupt businessman whose practices have been undermining the Swedish economy.

Stieg Larsson's literary inspiration for Lisbeth Salander came from an unlikely source: a popular children's book that was translated from the original Swedish into many different languages. Salander begins as a "dysfunctional girl with attention deficit disorder – someone who would have trouble fitting in," and Larsson explicitly named Astrid Lindgren's heroine as his source.[13] That Salander uses the nameplate "V. Kulla" (a not so veiled reference to Pippi Longstocking's Villa Villekulla) reinforces the connection. And Salander, in steadfastly disavowing the connection ("Somebody'd get a fat lip if they called me Pippi Longstocking" [40]), only reaffirms it.

Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking, in the book of that title, is "no ordinary girl."[14] With no adults supervising and limiting her games, the world literally becomes a playground for her transgressive boundary-crossing. From the start, Pippi puts her trickster skills on display, lying "all day long" (as a result of dwelling too long in the Congo), telling tall tales about adventures in exotic locales ranging from the "Cannibal Isles" to "Arabia." A hunter and "Thing-Finder," as well as a girl who loves riddles, she outriddles her enemies, defeating bullies, bandits, and strongmen. Pippi tells tall tales in order to survive – to outwit and outfox school officials and local authorities. A disruptive force, she succeeds, as skillfully as her mythical male counterparts, in uncovering the absurdity of social conventions and regulations in the culture from which she is excluded.

It is in films and books for children that the female trickster features most prominently and operates most comfortably. Stieg Larsson may have been inspired by Pippi Longstocking, but the Grimms' Gretel has also secured a firm position as a folkloric inspiration for writers and filmmakers in the postmodern era. It was Anne Sexton who first rehabilitated Gretel after years of neglect, caused in part because of the traumatic associations evoked, in a post-Holocaust era, by Gretel's

shoving of the witch into an oven. Sexton does not at all disavow the link between the German fairy tale and events in German history. When Hansel and Gretel's parents ponder what to do in "evil times," they come up with a "final solution" that will rid them of the children. Sprinkling the poem with terms like "blitz" and "Fräulein," Sexton strengthens rather than undoes the link between ovens and crematoria. Still, Gretel becomes something of a cultural heroine. She sees "her moment in history" and, "fast as Houdini," she turns on the oven. The burning of the witch becomes a "memorable incident," and the "woe of the oven" is invested with sacred significance, "like something religious." Gretel, who has "neither dropped pebbles or bread," bides her time, as Sexton puts it, waiting for the opportunity to put a stop to the cannibalism that is, but for "one turn in the road," in all of us.[15]

Gretel bursts into tears with irritating regularity in the Grimms' fairy tale. Only when Hansel has been locked up and deprived of agency does she rise to the challenges of engineering an escape. In Sexton's recycled version of the tale, Gretel is once again framed as passive, at least initially. In response to the witch's plans to cook Hansel, she nods her head and weeps. But it is she who turns the tables on the rapacious witch and who restores order, converting appetite into desire that comes to be regulated and ritualized rather than allowed to operate without constraints. Once again we see a trickster heroine to double duty bound.

Taking a story that slipped into cultural disfavor, in part because of its cruel and voracious adults, in part because of its disturbing historical allusions, Anne Sexton obliges us to face down the uncomfortable truths encapsulated within its plot. She defines Gretel as the heroic child standing up to a world of adult predators and thus paves the way for many modern refashionings of what I will call, in contradistinction to the Trickster and Trickstar, the Trickster Girl – by analogy with Carol Clover's notion of the heroic "Final Girl" in horror cinema.[16] The Final Girl of slasher films is, for Clover, nothing but a "male surrogate in things oedipal, a homoerotic stand-in" (53), a figure who is "boyish" and set apart from other girls by her "smartness, gravity, competence in mechanical and other practical matters, and sexual reluctance" (40). In fact, any effort to see her as a "feminist development," Clover tells us, is a "particularly grotesque form of wishful thinking" (53). And yet Trickster

Girls, for all their boyishness in their twentieth- and twenty-first-century incarnations, *are* symptomatic of a cultural shift, one that acknowledges women's mobility and access to skills traditionally coded as masculine. To be sure, Trickster Girls may still serve as proxies for adolescent boys and they may still mirror wishful thinking rather than reality, but they operate in a fictional world of opportunity far different from the realm inhabited by Trickstars.

Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* (1993) may seem like an unlikely reimagining of "Hansel and Gretel," but if we recall that the voracious velociraptors who turn on Lex and Tim are all female and that they mount their assault in a kitchen-like space, it becomes evident that we are watching a sci-fi update of the Grimms' tale. And it is Lex who saves the day when she sits down at the computer, recognizes how it runs ("It's a UNIX system! I know this!"), and then pulls up a program called "3D File System Navigator" to restore security systems in Jurassic Park. Interestingly, in Crichton's novel, it is Tim alone who manages to get the computers back on line. He wards off dinosaurs, protecting Lex when the adults are either dead or have let the children down. In a stroke of crowd-pleasing genius (perhaps part of the wishful thinking to which Clover refers), Lex becomes the computer geek who saves the day.

Like Lex, other Trickster Girls have to reckon with megavolt fences surrounding a setting that is or has become dystopic. If Lisbeth Salander's skills as a hacker and Lex's tech talents set their stories squarely in the technology-driven wonders of a digital culture, Katniss Everdeen's expertise in archery in Suzanne Collins's *Hunger Games* trilogy anchors her firmly in a post-apocalyptic world, a post-industrial wasteland that requires its inhabitants to revert to hunter/gatherer practices in order to survive. The country of Panem, despite its name alluding to the Latin word for bread, is anything but bountiful, and Katniss describes herself and her sister Prim as being little more than "skin and bones" after her father's death.[17] To survive, she uses her bows and arrows, hunting game to support her family.

Katniss not only possesses contraband weapons, but in true trickster fashion, she is also a trespasser and poacher. In order to reach hunting territory with sufficient game, she must become a boundary-crosser, traversing a "high chain-link fence topped with barbed-wire loop," which

is electrified for a good part of the day as a deterrent to poachers. The so-called Peacekeepers (or security forces) cannot outwit Katniss, whose sharp ears detect exactly when the electricity is turned off and who finds a loose stretch in the fence and slides under it. While training with Peeta, the other Tribute from Panem, Katniss learns how to build snares, traps that will leave a human competitor dangling, and to camouflage herself with mud, clay, vines, and leaves. A master of ruses and strategies, she wins the Hunger Games by outwitting not only her twenty-two opponents, but also the Ministry itself.

Like Gretel, Pippi Longstocking, and Lisbeth Salander, Katniss gorges on rich food, yet her hunger never ceases. “I’m starving,” she says, right after eating prodigious amounts of “goose liver and puffy bread.” At one of the banquets, she “shovels” lamb stew into her mouth and takes big gulps of orange juice. At another she eats herself sick in an orgy of dining comparable to Hansel and Gretel’s feast outside and inside the witch’s house. Her fantasies about food resemble the inventories we find in both the Grimms’ fairy tale and Salander’s grocery lists: “The chicken in creamy orange sauce. The cakes and pudding. Bread with butter. Noodles in green sauce. The lamb and dried plum stew” (30). Katniss admits to eating that stew “by the bucketful,” even though “it doesn’t show,” in ways that point to classic bulimic behaviors (127). The emphasis on orality is not at all unusual, given the socio-cultural climate of Panem, but it is a reminder of how trickster’s male appetites find culturally inflected female analogues. Katniss, like Gretel, moves from the primary orality manifested in a country where there are only two options: the famine conditions of the District in which she lives or the decadent feasts of the ruling class, who prove to be true bulimics, constantly vomiting in order to return to the trough.

The presence of mockingjays reminds us that orality yields at times, even in Panem, to aurality. Mockingjays, we learn, are a hybrid of female mockingbirds and male jabberjays, birds that were genetically altered and bred to memorize human conversations. Created by pure accident, mockingjays can replicate both human voices and bird whistles. They possess the gift of mimicking human songs: “And they could recreate songs. Not just a few notes, but whole songs with multiple verses” (43). These magical avian creatures become an emblem of revolutionary

possibility and of citizen solidarity. But beyond that, they also keep poetry alive in Panem. They become a kind of daemon, in the manner of those soul creatures invented by Philip Pullman for *His Dark Materials*. Suzanne Collins described them as avian doubles of Katniss:

> So here we have her arriving in the arena in the first book, not only equipped as someone who can keep herself alive in this environment – and then once she gets the bow and arrows, can be lethal – but she's also somebody who already thinks outside the box because they just haven't been paying attention to District 12. So in that way, too, Katniss is the mockingjay. She is the thing that should never have been created, that the Capitol never intended to happen. In the same way they just let the jabberjays go and thought, "We don't have to worry about them," they thought, "We don't have to worry about District 12." And this new creature evolved, which is the mockingjay, which is Katniss.[18]

In response to the last request of a fellow combatant, dying on the forest floor, Katniss produces a "mountain air," and, "almost eerily" (35), the mockingjays take up the song. Katniss has inherited and learned the gift of song from her father. When he sang, "even the birds stop to listen." Peeta falls in love with Katniss on the day that she displays her own gift of song in school, and "every bird outside the windows fell silent" (301). In a rare moment of utopian plenitude during the Hunger Games, Katniss sings a few notes from Rue's song and listens as the mockingjays repeat the melody: "Then the whole world comes alive with the sound" (29). The "lovely, unearthly harmony" produced by the birds leads Katniss, "mesmerized by the beauty of the song," to close her eyes and listen. It will be her task not only to win the Hunger Games but also to restore beauty and civility to a land devastated by both natural disasters and human failures, a land that has created the Avox, a person whose tongue has been cut and who can no longer make sounds or speak.

Like Gretel's exercises in dissimulation, Katniss's snares, ruses, and strategies lead her to poetry, to a display of how the melodious consolations of imagination are not imaginary consolations. Throughout the games, we learn about the value of wits – the "wits to survive" – as

well as about the importance of “outsmarting” others, remaining nimble and agile in order to defeat those with superior physical strength. Peeta too knows how to “spin out lies,” and the paired allies use their intelligence wisely to defeat the twenty-two other Tributes. More importantly, Katniss outfoxes not just the other Tributes but even the Gamemakers, and ultimately the Capitol. Katniss will, however, become not only a survivor, but also, in the sequels to *The Hunger Games*, a mockingjay, not just a symbol of revolutionary hope but also an agent of rebellion and change.

“There are some themes, some subjects, too large for adult fiction; they can only be dealt with adequately in a children’s book,” Philip Pullman tells us in his acceptance speech for the Carnegie medal.[19] Rewriting the Fall as an emancipatory moment in the history of the human race, he gives us a heroine who is a double of Eve but who leads mankind to redemption by pushing at boundaries and crossing them. Lyra Belacqua, or Lyra Silvertongue, has a name that binds her with both deception and art – she is a consummate storyteller, and her narrative art produces “a stream of pleasure rising upwards in her breast like the bubbles in champagne.” She may lack the lyre as musical instrument, but she can produce poetry as reader and exegete when she wields the truth-seeking instrument known as the alethiometer:

> The one thing that drew [Lyra] out of her boredom and irritation was the alethiometer. She read it every day, sometimes with Farder Coram and sometimes on her own, and she found that she could sink more and more readily into the calm state in which the symbol meanings clarified themselves, and those great mountain ranges touched by sunlight emerged into vision.[20]

Lyra does not partake of the gastronomical excesses found in *The Hunger Games* and *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Still, she shape-shifts in audacious ways, trying out new identities to protect herself but also for the sheer love of invention. In Bolvangar, she is Lizzie Brookes and pretends to be meek and stupid; in the Land of the Dead she becomes the child of a duke and duchess; and at one point she aligns herself with that “fabulous monster” that Lewis Carroll called Alice. Joining the ranks of postmodern adolescent Trickster Girls, she must struggle to survive in a world of

cruelly ambitious parents who fail to protect her. At the same time, she undertakes an epic redemptive journey that transforms her into a savior figure who lays the foundations for a new social and spiritual order.

"I find it hard to think of an equivalent of Lisbeth Salander anywhere else in the worlds of crime novels or films," wrote Lasse Bergström, head of the Swedish firm that published Larsson's trilogy.[21] His reaction mirrored the response of Larsson's many readers as well as many viewers of the film *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. And yet our culture seems to be creating, in films like *Hard Candy* (with its seemingly vulnerable Little Red Riding Hood lookalike), heroines who take justice into their own hands and enact revenge fantasies against what Stieg Larsson called "men who hate women" (the manuscript for what is now a trilogy originally came in two parts, each with that title). Building on rape revenge films of the 1970s and 1980s (*Lipstick*, *I Spit on Your Grave*, *Extremities*, etc.), *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* gives us a heroine whose identity exceeds her status as rape victim. Lisbeth is neither traumatized nor deranged by the abuse she has suffered. She accepts violence against women as the way of the world and acts coolly and efficiently to exact revenge for it. Combining the survival skills of the trickster, the cool intelligence of the boyish Final Girl, and the determination of rape victims, she becomes part of an action plot that is coded as an inviting crime/retaliation narrative, providing viewers with all the satisfactions of revenge exacted and enacted.

Suzanne Collins's Katniss combines Lisbeth's survival skills with a passionate social mission, but she lacks the hipster sexual confidence and self-consciousness of her older Swedish counterpart. As many commentators have pointed out, she is modeled on Artemis, goddess of the hunt, carrying the same silver bow and arrows. Like the goddess, she too is protector of the young and volunteers to take her sister's place when her name is chosen at the Reaping. Virginal and unaware of her own sexual allure, she is that rare thing in pop culture – an intelligent, courageous heroine on a complex quest of her own. Lisbeth's near pathological lack of affect and surplus sexual energy are balanced by Katniss's compassionate intensity and sexual innocence.

Lisbeth Salander and Katniss Everdeen mark a rupture in our understanding of what it means to be a female trickster. Unlike

Scheherazade, Bluebeard's wife, and even Gretel, Trickster Girls are experts at getting out of the house. They send strong signals about the possibilities, and perils, of new identities in the public sphere for women. As Ricki Stefanie Tannen puts it, "The female Trickster[s], whether embodied fictionally as sleuth, cyborg, or time-traveling feminista, are messengers charged with informing the collective consciousness about how identity and subjectivity can be constructed in postmodernity."[22] The new identity of the youthful Trickster Girl is not constructed at home as a wife but rather in the public sphere, and it marks a sharp break with a Trickstar like Scheherazade, who operates exclusively in the domestic sphere, becoming wife and mother, even as she recounts adventures and adversity. Yet Trickstars and Trickster Girls seem consistently united in their double mission of remaking the world even as they survive adversity.

While the postmodern Trickster Girl shares much with Hermes, Coyote, Loki, and Anansi, she also diverges sharply from her male counterparts. In shaping a new social and cultural identity, figures like Katniss and Lisbeth disavow the role of victim, refusing to succumb to the brute force of patriarchal rule. They are both survivors, managing to cheat death (Lisbeth is buried alive and Katniss is imperiled repeatedly) and reinvent themselves with new identities. And they embark on an explicit social mission missing in the aspirations of classic male tricksters. Like Scheherazade, they assume a social mission once they refuse the status of victim, and justice becomes their consuming passion, even as they retain many of the appetites of male tricksters.

Does the arc that takes us from Scheherazade to Lisbeth mark progress? Many of the female revenge fantasies that have proliferated in popular culture have been constructions of male writers and filmmakers. Critics have been quick to point out that some of these trickster heroines are less double agents than women who mimic models of the "conventional male action hero." Part of what makes Lisbeth Salander unique is her physical appearance, both masculine, or boyish, and muscular. Her tattoos, her lovemaking (she initiates and takes control), her technological skills, her decisive actions, and even her way of looking at people deviates sharply from feminine forms of self-representation and behavior. One critic surmises that Salander embodies a "creepy man's fantasy – a smart woman with a girl's barely pubescent body"; another sees in her a fantasy

about “total control.”[23] Self-contained and operating comfortably as an “independent contractor,” she has been conditioned by her traumatic childhood as well as by her genetic makeup to act more like a man than a woman, thereby operating less as reformer than as a figure who perpetuates cultural, social, and political norms. “Larsson’s work,” as two critics write, “is enmeshed in the very social, gendered, and economic paradigms it appears to want to critique.”[24] Ironically, the androgynous nature of Trickster Girls enables male cross-identification, thus further diluting the feminist message in the eyes of some critics.

Critics may be right to scold Stieg Larsson for embracing the pop-culture conventions of heroic individualism. The writer’s work would most likely not have shot up to the top of bestseller lists had he created a heroine with impeccable feminist credentials and a pragmatic political agenda. Instead, Larsson did exactly what we expect from iconoclasts, *bricoleurs*, and mythmakers. He constructed a heroine who becomes enmeshed in cultural contradictions and thereby unsettles and disturbs us, obliging us to rethink how we have made the world. Lisbeth Salander serves as a true double agent in forging her own unique social identity and gender distinctiveness as well as seeking retribution for victims of the social structures she shows to be tainted with hypocrisy, self-serving interests, and unrestrained greed.

The Trickster Girl materializes not out of thin air but from a close look at a variety of genres and archetypal characters that cross the divide separating literature and folklore. Given the fact that the covert operations of female tricksters were carried out so long in the domestic sphere, it is not surprising to find that fairy tales rather than myths became the privileged site for capturing their activities. That the female trickster migrated into fairy tales in no way diminishes her mythic power. The time might now be right to heed the advice of Claude Lévi-Strauss and to embrace the view that all versions of a story belong to the myth and require attentive inclusion. Unbridled appetites and mercurial energy have always made tricksters easy to identify. Their double-faced nature – incarnating paradox, exploiting contradictions, and enacting dualities – can be found in nearly every cultural landscape. If the male trickster occasionally oscillates between female and male, the female trickster has developed a more fluid notion of gender identity and has embraced

androgyny in her postmodern incarnations. But she has performed her most devious prank by pulling the wool over our eyes for so long, by giving herself a cloak of invisibility, even as she prowls around both at the margins and right in the center of our cultural entertainments, doing her work as double agent, to save herself and to rescue others.

Notes

1 Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 8.

2 Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1976).

3 George Cruikshank, ed. and illus., *Puss in Boots* (London: David Bogue, 1853).

4 Michael Bell, *Literature, Modernism and Myth: Belief and Responsibility in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

5 Cited by Hyde, *Trickster*, 79.

6 Maria Tatar, ed., *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales* (New York: Norton, 2002), 234–44.

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3 While beauty sleeps

The poetics of male violence in *Perceforest* and Almodóvar's *Talk to Her*

Shuli Barzilai

In times of old and new

A constant identifying feature links the numerous variants listed under "Sleeping Beauty" (ATU 410) in Hans-Jörg Uther's *Types of International Folktales*: a long sleep and its constitutive opposite, an awakening.[1] Yet another feature singles out this tale type, even while affiliating it with others: the gender-inflected dichotomy of stasis (indoors) versus mobility (outdoors). Movement typically characterizes male heroes: "If a young girl is kidnapped, and disappears from the horizon of her father…and if Iván goes off in search of her, then the hero of the tale is Iván and not the kidnapped girl. Heroes of this type may be termed *seekers*."[2] Women outdoors are either endangered – as is Snow White during her terrified flight through the woods in Walt Disney's animated film – or dangerous and even deadly – as is the Wicked Queen with poisoned apple in hand. Both sleeping/awakening and stasis/mobility have structured the tale ever since its literary inception in the middle ages.

Herbert Cole's 1906 illustration encapsulates the dynamic function of the hero. As the prince strides toward the castle where the princess sleeps, less fortunate contenders for the role of seeker-savior lie fallen among the brambles. That he will succeed in penetrating her maidenly enclosure is nicely signaled by the reach of his upraised sword (Figure 3.1).[3] Edward Burne-Jones's 1871 painting, by contrast, displays Sleeping Beauty inside a box or coffin-like setting. Figuratively dead to the outside world, were she to stretch out the hand behind her head, it would encounter the framework that circumscribes her.[4] These images capture the fairy tale's value-laden binary components.[5] As motion is to immobility, as pursuit to passivity, so the daring prince is to the dormant princess.

Figure 3.1 The prince cuts his way through the briars in Herbert Cole's illustration for *Fairy-Gold: A Book of Old English Fairy Tales*, 1906. Reprinted 1927.

No matter the medium or the genre, "Sleeping Beauty" is often thought, and with good reason, to uphold the symbolic paternal order and its regulatory institutions. As Madonna Kolbenschlag stresses in her well-known injunction to readers to kiss Sleeping Beauty good-bye: "Sleeping Beauty is most of all a symbol of *passivity*, and by extension a metaphor for the spiritual condition of women – cut off from autonomy and transcendence, from self-actualization and ethical capacity in a male-dominated milieu."[6] However, another plot component intermittently turns up among the tale's variants that is no less – and, in fact, far more – offensive and disturbing than the invariables of (female) sleeping as opposed to (male) seeking. Although expunged from the beloved fairy tale retold by the Brothers Grimm, this component recurs from medieval to postmodern times. In some variants, the male protagonist's breaking (through a hedge) and entering (into a castle) paves the way for, and is duplicated by, his sexual assault against a beautiful and not just defenseless but insensate woman. Rather than an uneventful hundred-

years' sleep, she undergoes a series of events before awakening: rape-impregnation-childbirth.

In this chapter I propose to focus on two ostensibly distant members of the "Sleeping Beauty" family that present the full unexpurgated story: the tale's literary advent in the anonymously authored French prose romance *Perceforest* (*c*. 1330–40),[7] and its contemporary revision in the Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar's *Talk to Her*.[8] Despite generic, geographic, and historical-cultural disparities, the crime committed in both works generates analogous narrative motifs and manipulations. In exploring these similarities-in-difference, my analysis will foreground the ethics and aesthetics of rape's representation: how sexual aggression becomes normalized through storytelling stratagems that reflect, and reinforce, dominant societal arrangements. To introduce another link into this textual chain, I intend to discuss an early seventeenth-century variant that includes the rape sequence, while eschewing the "apologetics" it entails in the fourteenth-century romance and twenty-first-century film: the Italian Giambattista Basile's version in *Il Pentamerone*.

In rewriting the medieval tale, Basile adopts a markedly raunchy, bold, and satirical or, in a word, Rabelaisian disposition toward the rape staged in his text.[9] This tone may be counted among the factors that led Jacob Grimm – notwithstanding his appreciation for the *Pentamerone*'s exotic "almost Eastern glow and sparkle" – to explain, in his Preface to the 1846 German translation, why he advised Basile's translator to remove "everything that might give offense": "inflections that sound vulgar to us today, even when they correspond exactly with the original Italian, have become harsher and cruder to our ears because we have other standards of decency."[10]

Unsurprisingly, then, the rape constitutes a central omission in the Grimms' influential version. Nothing happens to the spellbound princess; not a fly settles on her: "Even the fire flickering in the hearth became quiet and fell asleep."[11] In Charles Perrault's late seventeenth-century and Disney's twentieth-century adaptations, similar sensibilities prevail. Beauty is unaltered by the ravages of time or roving princes. These three "virtuous" versions will therefore serve as reference points for my reading of *Perceforest* and *Talk to Her*. Considered together and apart, the variants

to be discussed convey the ethical and aesthetic complexity (or the "poethics") of Sleeping Beauty's story and suggest varied motives for its enduring appeal.

Zellandine and Troylus

In a section titled "The Fruitful Sleep" of *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*, Jack Zipes provides a concise genealogy of the tale followed by these major variants: Basile's "Sun, Moon, and Talia" (1634), Perrault's "Sleeping Beauty" (1697), and Grimms' "Briar Rose" (1857). For readers familiar only with the Grimms' dominant version, in which a princess pricks her finger with a spindle and sleeps for one hundred years until a prince breaks the spell with a kiss, the notion of a *fruitful* sleep may seem puzzling. This phrase, however, aptly evokes the biblical injunction to "be fruitful and multiply," for in the vividly detailed episode of Zellandine and Troylus in *Perceforest*, a knight impregnates a king's daughter who gives birth to a son while she sleeps. In Basile's embellishment of this "juicy" tale, Talia (formerly Zellandine) has twins, a boy and a girl, without her volition or knowledge. Contrastively, in most subsequent versions, prince and princess are properly wedded first, and fruits produced only after.

The medieval pre-text of "Sleeping Beauty" could thus be called "The Rape of the Recumbent Virgin." At the story's climax, Troylus removes his knight's attire and lies beside a maiden who can neither speak nor move. "Finding himself in this privileged position," the knight takes "all he wanted of the beautiful Zellandine – including her right to the name of maiden." Consequently, the storyteller has a difficulty comparable to Troylus's inner turmoil before casting off his chivalric vows together with his armor: "Propriety…told him it would be a betrayal to do this: no true lover would harm his beloved."[12]

Plainly put, the problem is: how to present the protagonist in a situation that enables him to consummate his desires, on the one hand – but without breaching the ethics of chivalry, on the other? As is written in Book 1: "the female should have the rule of her own body, and the male should not use force against her will." That is why "the god of Nature instituted a safeguard known as consent" (80). King Alexander subsequently settles a dispute between rivals for a damsel's hand by proclaiming: "No maidens

in this country are or ever will be slaves"; and so, "The proper thing…is to ask the maiden what *she* thinks!" (89). Women's consent is a repeated theme in *Perceforest*.[13] Nothing should be taken that is not freely given.

The crux is precisely this tension between Troylus's "professional identity" as a true knight and the unchivalric conduct described in Book 3. The storyteller resolves the tension by constructing an elaborate plot around the rape. Goddesses, a trickster spirit, magic – all manner of supernatural and narratological ploys are enlisted in the hero's defense. Certain elements become stable features of the classic tale: a princess's birth, an offended fairy, a pricked finger followed by a protracted sleep, and a male redeemer. But the rape scene disappears, drops out of sight, whereas the narrative sequence invented not just to mitigate but legitimate it stays in place.

Among the extenuating circumstances in *Perceforest*: the "strong and handsome" Troylus and Zellandine, daughter of King Zelland, meet and fall in love in Book 2 (241). Love does not wait till after beauty sleeps, as in Perrault's and Grimms' tales. (Disney's film cloyingly reintroduces the pre-sleep romance, adding adorable woodland creatures as chaperons.) The lovers are parted while Troylus goes adventuring like a good knight should, and not until Book 3 does he hear from sailors of his beloved's mysterious slumber.[14] At Zelland's court, a "born fool," endowed with clairvoyance, insists Zellandine will not be cured by anyone but Troylus: "He's got the remedy!" (386). Troylus eventually encounters an old man who reports what midwives have been speculating: at the princess's birth, "the goddesses were perhaps not welcomed in the manner they would wish, so that all three – or two or one alone felt aggrieved" (388).

Finally, when Zellandine wakes up, "astounded" to find an infant beside her, Zelland's sister, her caretaker and aunt, gives a first-hand account of what took place years earlier. On the day of Zellandine's birth, her aunt had prepared the customary feast for three important goddesses. Themis, the goddess of destiny, was insulted by the absence of a knife for her food and vengefully decreed: "from the first thread of linen that [Zellandine] spins…a shard will pierce her finger and cast her into a sudden sleep, from which she'll never wake up until it's sucked out" (409). The goddess Venus, however, promised to ensure the shard would be removed and all

made well again. Anachronies or temporal deviations thus provide information about past events and also prepare for future contingencies.

In view of later retellings, I would emphasize that Zellandine herself did nothing wrong; nonetheless, the “sins” of a previous generation are visited upon her. The anger of one woman with another leads to the punishment of a third and the intervention of a fourth. This motif of intra-female hostilities carries over into the canonical versions. Unlike male aggression, a need to elide it never seems to arise. On the contrary, Troylus is cast in a role that *requires* him to ravish Zellandine in order to produce the cause of her cure.[15] In effect, rape is the rescue. No less than Venus mandates he perform the deed: “When you pluck from the slit / The fruit that holds the cure / The girl will be healed” (389). And so indeed she is. The infant mistakes his mother’s finger for her nipple and sucks until the shard comes out: “At that very moment the girl awoke” (408). After more adventures, the knight returns to marry the princess whose affliction he remedied in such a remarkable way.

Standing back from this convoluted story, which has more twists and turns than those recounted here, the storyteller’s solution to the problem posed earlier is clear. The hero’s transgression is multiply sanctioned in context. In addition to narratological devices, divinity plays an active role: after Venus guides Troylus with explicit verses, a miraculous messenger transports him into the tower bedchamber where he need only “follow the urgings of the goddess” (390); and when he still hesitates alongside the maiden, “who lay there naked, white, and soft,” the goddess enflames him so that he cannot help but answer “Venus’s urging” – a phrase finely poised between literal and figurative meanings (392). When *all* is told, and contra the Grimms’ and Disney’s partial rose-tinted retellings, a kiss does not trigger the awakening. Rather, it is what Troylus “gives” Zellandine: a (re)birth gift to counter the malevolent gift of destiny.

Although this story is indubitably titillating, it remains to be asked: what has made it survive, in countless adaptations, among the multiple interconnected stories in the extensive romance of Arthurian Britain? As Bruno Bettelheim and others have done, I presuppose the vitality of “Sleeping Beauty” as story and image derives from its symbolic (or symptomatic) representation of human desires. But these desires are time-bound rather than atemporal or universal formations: “once upon a time”

signifies the plasticine-like realms molded by readers of different ages – that is, differing in periods of personal life and general history. Hence Sleeping Beauty's story invites interpretation as a dream-text composed of diverse desires. So to restate my inquiry: What might this tale tell to (and about) its individual readers? What particular unsatisfactory realities does it wishfully correct?

Writing about "Sleeping Beauty" in the 1980s, Francine Prose recalls her girlhood devotion to the tale while concurrently perceiving how it may "suddenly reveal that dark subterranean detail, that knotty little plot twist squirming under the surface." Citing Basile and Perrault as its authorial transcribers, she offers a disturbing but compelling reason for the tale's allure: "It's men who have imagined this – that is, imagined *other* men capable of falling in love with…a living woman convincingly impersonating a dead one."[16] The generative fantasy that propels the plot is a type of necrophilia: "not exactly sex with a corpse – literal graveyard *amour* – but rather sex with a woman who only *appears* to have left the world of the living." Think, for instance, of Hoffmann's automaton Olympia in "The Sandman," or Poe's incomparable and lifeless Annabel Lee, or Kleist's drugged and impregnated Marquise of O, or the somnolent Tess's attraction for Alec D'Urberville in Hardy's novel, or the "icy, ethereal" Madeline's for Scottie in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*.[17] Prose gives ample evidence for resolving the riddle of what produces such scenarios by addressing another conundrum. Recast in terms of Freud's (in)famous question, she implicitly asks: what does a man want? Her reply draws on Sleeping Beauty's disclosure: the ultimate object of male desire is a special kind of *objet d'art* – a supine, passively acquiescent female body, a beautiful "dead" woman who can't talk back.

Peter Newell's 1907 illustration may be viewed as representative of this textual substratum.[18] The seeker approaching the beauty laid out before (or for) him, like a corpse on a bier, but not touching her – as yet – has been often portrayed. Such images seem to uphold the claim: "It's men who have imagined this." However, as Prose admits at her essay's outset, "Sleeping Beauty" also strongly appeals to young girls and women. It thus appears to involve distinctive fantasies for female readers. So imagine Anon (in this case, the author-narrator of the very first version) were

indeed, as Virginia Woolf ventured to guess, a woman.[19] What, then, does this fairy tale tell us about what a woman wants?

Without presuming to exhaust the possible responses, I would like to pursue a three-pronged hypothesis. First, the story conjures up a good long sleep, restful and undisturbed. There is no call to scrounge for food, to cook, to clean, to provide care for others. It is a magical state in which daily toil, struggle, and suffering vanish, and tasks get done without the woman lifting a proverbial finger. Someone else takes care of the dust and the dishes, in fact, of all labors. Sleeping Beauty's story affords not only an escape from housekeeping but also a luxurious bed. No evil stepmother and stepsisters command her: "Cinderella was their maid. / She slept on the sooty hearth each night"; no needy dwarfs demand her services: "they asked her to stay and keep house."[20]

Second, in some variants, rape, pregnancy, and childbirth take place *in absentia*. Perhaps these tales speak to a fear of sexual penetration, an unwillingness to be present during the act. While physically available, the woman is absent, unconscious, insensible. Moreover, after having eluded the travails of pregnancy and childbirth, she wakes up one day, as Basile's Talia does, to find she has beautiful twins who are cared for by fairies. The realities of infertility, as well as of maternal and infant mortality, are non-existent. All thrive and prosper.

Yet a third fantasy places "Sleeping Beauty" among perennial fairy-tale favorites: the realization of the desire to be the object of the Other's desire. This phrasing, which I adapt from Jacques Lacan's often-cited formula "man's desire is the desire of the Other," has the advantage of inclusiveness:[21] Namely, this fantasy neither belongs exclusively to women, nor is the Other necessarily a male subject. Rather, it also addresses the desire of women to be homosocially attractive – to elicit admiration from other women – and, no less important, to be pleasing in and to themselves.

Such a desire patently arises because the Other inculcated within women frequently occupies a position of disapproval and criticizes the self with severity. In this fabled (yet ever-so real) confrontation with a merciless mirror: "She would ask, / Looking glass upon the wall, / who is the fairest of us all?" and it would never reply: "You are fairest."[22] Contrarily, it

would magnify the faults and flaws, the intractable distance between the ideal and her self. The central prop of “Sleeping Beauty,” of course, is not a loquacious mirror but a taciturn mattress. Nonetheless, although endowed with no uncanny qualities, Beauty’s bed becomes the staged venue for an unconditionally admiring gaze: “He was bowled over” (*Perceforest* 391). Sweet dreams are made of this.

Looking again at Newell’s picture, or at Warwick Goble’s 1913 scenario (Figure 3.2),[23] it seems a cartoon-balloon is wanted to allow the prince a word to express his wonder. “Wow!” would do well. In different words, the fantasies condensed in the notion of *sleeping* and *beauty*, and enacted through the fairy-tale plot, fulfill continuing – albeit uneasily acknowledged – wishes for women. “Sleeping Beauty” dissimulates or glosses over the inhibitions, anxiety, and guilt accompanying such “selfish” desires. To pursue my interpretive hypothesis, the several male authors examined here have appropriated and remolded a tale written by and for women. But the tale’s submerged voices are never completely silenced.[24] It is only, and always, important to listen.

Figure 3.2 The prince approaches Sleeping Beauty in Warwick Goble’s illustration for Dinah Maria Mulock Craik’s *The Fairy Book*, 1913.

Alicia and Benigno

The correspondence between *Talk to Her* and "Sleeping Beauty" is by now a critical commonplace. Almodóvar himself alludes to it in praising actress Leonor Watling's eloquent immobility: "She's wonderful playing the sleeping beauty in the 'El Bosque [The Forest]' Clinic. Her motionless body is so expressive and so moving!"[25] The clinic's very name evokes the fairy-tale castle surrounded by "trees, large and small, interlaced by brambles."[26] Even more striking is how closely Almodóvar's plot parallels the main events in the earliest variants: sleep-rape-pregnancy-childbirth-awakening. This sequence is primarily known today to medievalists and folklorists. Nonetheless, Almodóvar disregards the cause of awakening in Perrault's tale: good timing ("He approached…and knelt down before her. At that moment, the enchantment having ended, the princess awoke"[27]), and most famously, in Grimms': good timing plus a kiss ("Now the hundred years had just ended…[W]hen his lips touched hers, Briar Rose opened her eyes" [697–8]). His film revivifies the dormant storyline in which rape results in remedy.

The tales of Zellandine and Troylus in Arthurian Britain and of Alicia (Watling) and Benigno (Javier Cámara) in modern-day Spain are contiguous on additional levels. Most pertinent for my analysis, however, is the comparable problem faced by the writer-director in staging the crime: How can rape be represented in a way that will not make audiences unhesitatingly recoil and condemn both perpetrators – the filmmaker and the rapist? The means devised in *Talk to Her* are remarkably analogous to the intricate narrative steps taken in *Perceforest*. A structural constancy, a "repetition of fundamental components" emerges that, as Vladimir Propp observes, "exceeds all expectations."[28]

But before juxtaposing these recurrent components, I would examine "Sun, Moon, and Talia" for contrast. Basile retells the tale directly, without the extenuating devices used in *Perceforest*. It so happens that while hunting for other game, a king finds the secluded palace where Talia sleeps. Unimpeded by chivalric hesitations, he soon "gather[s] the fruits of love" from the maiden and returns to his kingdom: "for a long time, he forgot about all that had happened."[29] At least nine months later, he remembers his adventure and takes up where he left off, pleased to find Talia awake, with "two masterworks of beauty" beside her (686). Upon

leaving again, he promises to come back – after all, she is fully conscious – and take her to his kingdom. Until this point, the hunter-king (and Basile) has neglected to tell Talia (and the reader) that he is already married. Adultery now adjoins rape and abandonment. In mid-paragraph, his wife is introduced and another plot unfolds in which the queen, "who had the heart of Medea," seeks revenge (686). Her machinations backfire, however, when the king arrives home and orders his old wife thrown onto the pyre she has prepared for his young mistress. He is rewarded by a long life with his new wife, and as for Talia, she learns: "*even when asleep / a person can be struck by luck*" (688; emphasis in text). All ends well, except for the first wife.

Rape is thus transmuted not just into remedy but *luck*. However ironic or satiric this "lesson" may be, Talia is indeed fortunate insofar as Basile, unlike his medieval precursor, implicates her twice in the events leading to her rape. In the first instance, she leans out a window instead of remaining modestly indoors and glimpses a spinning woman pass by. Never having seen a spindle before, Talia (akin to Eve in Eden and the wives in Bluebeard's castle) becomes "so curious that she had the old woman come up to her room."[30] She invites the outside inside, and all her father's precautions are overturned by her incaution. In the second, when the king discovers her, and Talia fails to awaken "no matter how much he touched her or cried out," the inevitable happens: "Her beauty…set him afire" (685). This construction puts the usually hands-on king in a passive position. So there is poetic justice in Talia's near death by fire.

Things are not so clear and easy in *Perceforest* or, latterly, in *Talk to Her*. Other moral codes are operative, and complex measures needed to vindicate sexual violence. Almodóvar, for example, develops the motif of male bonding and loyalty prominent in *Perceforest* – but irrelevant to most variants of "Sleeping Beauty" – by doubling the plot. He tells a tale of two men brought together by their love for two comatose women. The storyline of Benigno the nurse and Alicia the ballet dancer intersects with that of Marco (Darío Grandinetti) the journalist and Lydia (Rosario Flores) the bullfighter. The affective value of brotherhood, as seen later, becomes crucial for the film's denouement. However, Marco's empathic perception of Benigno, both before and after his transgression, predisposes viewers to sympathize with him.

The representation of time further complicates matters of judgment and censure. In contrast to storytellers who exclude the rape (Perrault, the Grimms, Disney), or excuse the predator by reproaching his prey (Basile), in *Perceforest* and *Talk to Her* mitigating the ravishment of sleeping beauties evidently calls for fracturing the diegetic order. Temporal discordances frequently interrupt the narrative preceding the rape. Deviant textual linearity thus paves the way for the hero's deviant action. The insult of the missing knife – an emblem of phallic prowess? – that triggered the cut in Zellandine's life-course is revealed through analepses ("flashbacks") to her birth. To undo the punitive decree of Themis clearly compels potent measures on Troylus's part. Correspondingly, Almodóvar digs many tunnels, as it were, to provide access to Benigno's past: his years of devotion to a bedridden mother, perhaps in compensation for her desertion by his father; the loneliness he admits to a psychiatrist, Alicia's father, as his most troubling problem after his mother's death; the four years he nurses the vegetative Alicia, ministering to her physically and talking to her constantly in the unwavering belief that words can sustain her tenuous hold on life, just as such attentions supported his mother. The convenience of mother-blame thus analeptically enters into the diegesis, as does a close substitute, aunt-blame, when Zellandine finds newborn proof a man had "dealings with her body" while she slept (409).

Unlike the variability of analepsis, prolepsis ("foreshadowing") is a built-in feature of the traditional tale. The seventh good fairy in Perrault's version, or the twelfth wise woman in Grimms', partly undoes the death pronounced at the princess's christening and reshapes the future: "The princess will pierce her hand with a spindle. But instead of dying, she'll only fall into a deep slumber that will last one hundred years. At the end of that time, a king's son will come to wake her" (689). This predictive promise effectively delineates the entire plot. Suspense not only shifts from "What will happen next?" to "How is it going to happen?"[31] By mirroring future events in capsule form, the fairy's words also produce a specific mode of anachronic duplication: prospective *mise en abyme*.[32] Insofar as such mirroring in general constitutes the narrative equivalent of Matisse's "painting of a room in which a miniature version of the same paintings hangs on one of the walls,"[33] prospective *mise en abyme* corresponds to showing the miniature before displaying the room itself.

Almodóvar uses this device at the beginning, middle, and end of his film. His anticipatory mirrors include one invented and two borrowed artworks.

Before examining each artwork in context, I would note that proleptic excursions into the future (like analeptic revelations of the past) have a special function in *Perceforest* and *Talk to Her*. If you do not want to blame the victim – as in: "she set him afire," or "she made him/me do it" – then you need to devise more imaginative means of defense for the aggressor. In the case of Troylus, whose offense is fulsomely portrayed, this function is similarly upfront and unmistakable. So when the court fool declares Troylus alone has the remedy, and when Venus anticipates the cure with graphic instructions ("Love will find the slit /…If you're a man, be on your way!" [389]), there can be no doubt about what the hero is *supposed* to do. These predictions sanction his subsequent unlawful action.

In the far murkier case of Benigno, the rape occurs offscreen and becomes known only retrospectively, when Alicia's pregnancy is reported to law-abiding and enforcing authorities. As Despina Kakoudaki astutely remarks, "While ostensibly focusing on communication and disclosure in the very title of *Talk to Her*, Almodóvar deploys an extensive vocabulary of secrecy and concealment in the film's narration."[34] This vocabulary involves a device that reflects the crime without showing it: a film-within-the-film. In other terms, the *mise-en-scène* – the compositional elements arranged in front of the camera – contains a prospective *mise en abyme*. Just as the fairy implants Sleeping Beauty's story before its "real" time, so Almodóvar creates a black-and-white film, *The Shrinking Lover*, in the style of 1920s silent cinema, to presage and stand in for Alicia's violation. Temporally, the rape is therefore twice-removed from the viewer: although resembling a film from the past, *The Shrinking Lover* actually foreshadows the future.[35] But the crime scene itself is unseen.

When asked to explain "What brought [him] to this idea of the silent film?" Almodóvar candidly responded:

> I wanted to hide what was going on in the clinic. I wanted to cover it up…Benigno had become like a friend of mine, although I wrote the character. Sometimes, you don't want to see things that your friends do. I didn't want to show Benigno doing what he did in the clinic. I

> also did not want to show the audience that image. So I put the silent movie in there…I anticipate what is going to happen later in the film.[36]

Like the briar hedges defending Beauty's castle, the ambiguities surrounding the rape in the clinic are, at least partly, an effect of this proleptic embedding. Almodóvar discloses the secret he simultaneously conceals by inserting a science-fiction or surreal film about a love-struck man, diminished by drinking an experimental diet potion prepared by the beautiful scientist he adores. As she lies sleeping, the lover clambers over the landscape of her vast naked body and finally enters her cavernous vagina, staying inside forever.

In the framing filmic story, as Benigno is telling the silenced Alicia about the silent movie he has just seen, the audience watches it replay before his mind's eye. Mutually exclusive possibilities proliferate: is the huge woman *en abyme* a surrogate for Benigno's mother and, therefore, a reflection of her little boy's unresolved incestuous desires? Or is she the Alice wandering in Wonderland he now desires because of her recumbent stillness? Is the film-within-the-film to be viewed as a prefiguration of the action? Or does it suggest rape and impregnation have already occurred since the woman is (ful)filled by her lover?[37] In respecting Benigno's privacy, Almodóvar arguably neither condones nor condemns but, rather, circumlocates the rape via cinematic proxy. *The Shrinking Lover* is grotesque, tenderly comic, and tragic – all at the same time. It dramatizes a fantasy of unending orgasmic union with an immensely desirable woman. But to dwell in her womb is also commensurate with death. The faux film (fore)tells the truth about Benigno's deed, even as it prefigures his death in delusory union with Alicia.

Almodóvar's recreation of, and tribute to, the silent film era is the second of three "set pieces" that hold up a mirror to his screenplay. Each piece constitutes a miniature narrative of the unfolding narrative. Although the spectator comprehends this reflexive relation only on re-viewing the film, the director uses it to give depth and opacity to the fictional character who has become his friend. To the extent that Benigno misleads us, Almodóvar is his metadiegetic accomplice. "Benigno" itself denotes kindness, goodwill, non-malignancy. Where the author of

Perceforest conjures divinities and magical means to absolve his protagonist – and where Disney animates muppet-like good fairies and the magnificent Maleficent to add appeal to a simple script with no moral complications – Almodóvar uses a prospective strategy for analogous effects: in minimizing the rape by literally shrinking the lover, his *mise en abyme* also creates an entertaining distraction. Nevertheless, like the dumb show at the structural center of *Hamlet*, the expressively reticent movie at midpoint in *Talk to Her* exposes the perpetrator by reflecting his crime, probably before (and not after) its commission. Sealed lips can speak louder than words.

Almodóvar "bookends" his film with a pair of dance-theater works: the first, an excerpt from the German choreographer Pina Bausch's *Café Müller*, and the last, from her *Masurca Fogo* (Fiery Mazurka). *Talk to Her* opens with curtains rising to reveal a stage full of scattered chairs and tables. Two somnambulist women, with eyes closed and arms outstretched, nearly stumble into the obstructions pushed out of their way by an attentive male dancer. But the women eventually collide into walls and fall, their limbs becoming immobile. Almodóvar's inaugural *mise en abyme* clearly presages the sleeping beauties, Alicia and Lydia, while the male dancer condenses the figures of Benigno and Marco. (This dreamlike condensation of two-into-one anticipates the filmic resolution.) Bausch's dancers move to the music of Henry Purcell's *The Fairy-Queen* (1692), whose libretto is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, evoking a broad vista of textual intersections.[38] Its bleak mood notwithstanding, *Café Müller* thus resonates with echoes of a romantic comedy about star-crossed lovers who overcome the obstacles put in their path by preternatural forces.

The camera then crosscuts to a close-up of two spectators, as yet strangers, sitting in adjacent seats. Such diegetic coincidence, as competent readers know, is a consequence of metadiegetic provision. Another crosscut to Benigno's curious glance at the tearful Marco heralds their friendship. Although additional anticipatory elements may be extracted from the opening scene, I want to underscore this analogy: the private clinic where both women are looked after, and looked at, is a self-contained space, a world onto its own – like a dance with its performance rules. Such a world, it may be inferred, could sway some who dwell in it to

deviate from straight and narrow paths. In shaping how Benigno's aberration will be perceived, the pre-text is another pretext.

Almodóvar's closing *mise en abyme* is retro-prospective: That is, *Masurca Fogo* replicates several events both before and after its point of insertion into the film. All that precedes it serves to prepare for it. The forces of destiny shape-change into a car that hits Alicia while crossing a street and a bull that gores Lydia during a bullfight. In *Talk to Her*, as in *Perceforest*, lovers meet before misfortune strikes: A quasi-dead beauty apparently does not arouse amorous desires. But, although Alicia's and Lydia's vocations embody distinctive arts of movement, comparable images of immobility – of Sleeping Beauty on her bier-like bed and Snow White inside her coffin – hover in the background, for when initially seen by the men who come to love them, both women are already encased in glass. Benigno discovers Alicia inside a glass-walled studio across the street from his apartment. She remains distant and inaccessible while conscious and differently inaccessible (and too accessible) during her coma. Marco is first captivated by Lydia when watching a television interviewer relentlessly interrogate her about her recent breakup with another bullfighter. Boxed inside the television set, Lydia was and, as it turns out, still is the object of the Other's desire. Unlike Benigno, however, Marco consummates his passion, with Lydia's consent, *before* fate intervenes in the shape of a raging bull.

This difference in moral timing may be deemed crucial for the outcomes of their twinned love stories. Society punishes Benigno and expels him from its midst. Marco, who loved and lost Lydia to another lover and then to death, and who loved and lost Benigno to despair – but stayed on the right side of the law throughout his ordeals – is last viewed at the theater. Only one row separates him temporarily (so it is intimated) from Alicia. This reduction of a quadrangulated configuration to a couple, to "Marco and Alicia" as the final caption reads, is complexly and, to my mind, problematically achieved in the film. Its shift from a modality of grief to gaiety necessitates a double death.

First, the lithe and angular Lydia, the dark "phallic" woman who usurped the role of bullfighter, is not raped and impregnated during her coma. Her "essential femininity" is not affirmed through the remedy applied to her counterpart: the pale and pliant dancer. (The camera's eye

lingers repeatedly over her bare, rounded, full breasts as Alicia lies in limbo.) Therefore, and I use this causal term advisedly, Lydia dies and Alicia lives. *Talk to Her* recalls the notorious dictum: "the death…of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world."[39] While bringing the fairy tale up-to-date – accidents replace offended fairies, a clinic replaces a castle, et cetera – Almodóvar presents the death of one beauty in tandem with the recovery of another owing to male intervention. The age-old story that giving her a baby can cure a woman's ills, can settle her "wandering womb" or whatever, remains unchanged.

Second, Benigno, the caretaker whose crime restored a life, loses his reason for living. When Marco visits his despairing friend in prison, the glass partition between them suddenly causes their reflections to overlap; as in a composite photograph, the camera shows the two, visually and symbolically, coalescing into one. It is only fitting, then, that after Benigno's "escape" from prison, Marco should inherit his apartment – and his object-choice. In effect, he literally steps into the place left empty by Benigno's suicide. The camera tracks Marco's movements toward the window where Benigno used to gaze at Alicia. We watch him watching and rediscovering her in the dance studio. She has arisen from the prostrate ranks of dead beauties.

So we are invited to conclude that Benigno was not, at bottom, a rapist, a ravager in sheep's clothing, but rather a redeemer, a scapegoat and sacrificial victim. As constructed through Almodóvar's artful stratagems of exculpation, the exemplary albeit deviant character of Benigno, with his capacity for utter devotion, is difficult to condemn outright, even for a resisting reader like me. The "fruit" or stillborn son he gathered from Alicia's barely sensate body becomes a tertiary death that facilitates the transition from tragic to comic mode.

Hence the interpolation of *Masurca Fogo* is retro-prospective. Looking back, it reflects Benigno's completed story; looking forward, it reveals a new story's onset. In his self-interview, Almodóvar clarifies why he chose this artwork: "'Masurca Fogo' begins with the sadness of the absent Benigno (the sighs) and unites the surviving couple (Marco and Alicia) through a shared bucolic emotion: several couples are dancing in the country to the rhythm of a Cabo Verde [Cape Green] mazurka"; and he

fully acknowledges: “If I had asked for it specifically I couldn’t have got anything better. Pina Bausch had unknowingly created the best doors through which to enter and leave ‘Talk to Her.’”[40]

As a line of couples dances across the stage, united in their playful movements, and as Alicia and Marco smile at each other across the theater row, Almodóvar’s *mise-en-scène* evokes the multiple unions with which wedding comedies end. Whereas *Café Müller* had foreshadowed events darkly, *Masurca Fogo* casts an upbeat light on coming developments.

Happily ever after?

Summarily stated, in the Sleeping Beauty stories discussed here, the basic fantasy elements exhibit notable consistency. Sexual fulfillment with an insensate, young, often virginal beauty is vouchsafed the venturesome male character. Tender loving care and, above all, admiration for her exquisite beauty befall the supine female character. As the Grimms chastely picture these time-honored polarities: “There she lay, and her beauty was so marvelous, that he could not take his eyes off her. Then he leaned over and gave her a kiss” (698). What radically shifts over time is the grounds for awakening. Ravishment recedes from view; pregnancy and childbirth likewise vanish.

But while a kiss popularly supplants rape, and consummation waits till after a splendid wedding, certain fantasies continue to circulate and occasionally supersede the scenes of their erasure. That Almodóvar has made a commercially and critically successful film in the twenty-first century so close in content and design to a fourteenth-century narrative suggests that this knot or nexus of tales remains difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate. Although seemingly far-faraway, some stories are still all-too-near.

Notes

1 Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography*, 3 vols. (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica,

2004), vol. I, 244–5.

2 Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 36.

3 Herbert Cole (illus.), "The Sleeping Beauty," in *Fairy-Gold: A Book of Old English Fairy Tales*, ed. Ernest Rhys (London: J. M. Dent, 1906).

4 Edward Coley Burne-Jones, "The Sleeping Beauty," accessible online at Heiner, www.surlalunefairytales.com/illustrations/sleepingbeauty/burnejonesleep4.html. Retrieved June 27, 2014. Karen Seago demonstrates, in "Aspects of Gender in Translations of 'Sleeping Beauty,'" *Comparative Critical Studies* 2, 1 (2004): 23–43, the pervasive influence of Coventry Patmore's imagery of domestic angels and John Ruskin's of queenly gardens on nineteenth-century literary and pictorial adaptations of "Sleeping Beauty," including the images in Burne-Jones's *Briar Rose* series.

5 As Jack Zipes concludes after studying contemporary "Sleeping Beauty" picture books, in "Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale," in *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 147–64: "little has been altered since the early nineteenth century with regard to the socio-political gesture of text and image" (159).

6 Madonna Kolbenschlag, *Kiss Sleeping Beauty Good-Bye: Breaking the Spell of Feminine Myths and Models* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979), 5. For examples of how subsequent feminist rewritings and criticism have reconfigured this fairy-tale tradition, see Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère, "Conjuring the Curse of Repetition or 'Sleeping Beauty' Revamped: Angela Carter's *Vampirella* and *The Lady of the House of Love*," in *Des* Fata *aux fées: Regards croisés de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, ed. de la Rochère and Véronique Dasen (Lausanne: Étude de Lettres, 2011), 337–58; and Carolina Fernández Rodríguez, "The Deconstruction of the

Male-Rescuer Archetype in Contemporary Feminist Revisions of 'The Sleeping Beauty,'" *Marvels & Tales* 16, 1 (2002): 51–70.

7 Nigel Bryant's "Introduction," in *Perceforest: The Prehistory of King Arthur's Britain*, trans. Nigel Bryant (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), 24–5, provides the dates and manuscript history of *Perceforest*.

8 Pedro Almodóvar (dir.), *Talk to Her* [*Hable con ella*], screenplay by Pedro Almodóvar (Spain: Ocho y Medio/El Deseo, 2002).

9 See Benedetto Croce, "The Fantastic Accomplishment of Giambattista Basile and His *Tale of Tales*," in *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*, ed. and trans. Jack Zipes (New York: Norton, 2001), 885–8, for discussion of Rabelais's influence on Basile.

10 Quoted in Croce, "Fantastic Accomplishment," 899.

11 Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, "Briar Rose [*Dornröschen*]," in *Great Fairy Tale Tradition*, ed. Zipes, 696–8, at 697. Further references will be given in the text.

12 *Perceforest: The Prehistory of King Arthur's Britain*, 392. Further references will be given in the text.

13 Bryant, "Introduction," 5–7. On the disparity between thematic preoccupation and actual practice, see Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

14 An edifying analysis of the storytelling episodes about orality in *Perceforest* and later variants appears in Donald Haase, "Kiss and Tell: Orality, Narrative, and the Power of Words in 'Sleeping Beauty,'" in de la Rochère and Dasen, eds., *Des* Fata *aux fées*, 279–96.

15 Roberta Krueger points out, in "Questions of Gender in Old French Courtly Romance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge University Press, 2000), that "many Arthurian romances 'aestheticize' or romanticize women's roles as helpless victims of rape or male violence," thereby legitimizing crimes against women (137). Cf. Jacques Barchilon's argument, in "*L'histoire de* La Belle au bois dormant *dans le* Perceforest," *Fabula* 31, 1–2 (1990): 19, that the Sleeping Beauty story in *Perceforest* is incontestably parodic because it describes events utterly contrary to courtly love tradition.

16 Francine Prose, "Sleeping Beauty," in *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Women Writers Explore Their Favorite Fairy Tales*, ed. Kate Bernheimer 2nd edn. (New York: Anchor, 2002), 285, 287.

17 *Ibid*., 287–8.

18 Peter Sheaf Hersey Newell (illus.), in Anon., *Favorite Fairy Tales: The Childhood Choice of Representative Men and Women* (New York: Harper, 1907). The image can be found at Heiner, www.surlalunefairytales.com/illustrations/sleepingbeauty/newellsleep.html. Retrieved June 27, 2014.

19 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929; London: Grafton, 1977), 48. In fact, as current scholarly evidence shows, "elite women were literate as readers and less often as writers throughout the Middle Ages"; see Krueger, "Questions," 133.

20 Anne Sexton, "Cinderella" and "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," in *Transformations* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 53–7, at 54; 3–9, at 6, respectively.

21 Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1978), 115. Although Lacan's formula lends itself to various interpretations, Dylan Evans usefully observes, in *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian*

Psychoanalysis (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), that its most important aspect is the emphasis on desire as socially conditioned: "Desire is not the private affair it appears to be but is always constituted in a dialectical relationship with the perceived desires of other subjects" (39).

22 Sexton, "Snow White," 5.

23 Warwick Goble (illus.), "Sleeping Beauty," in *The Fairy Book*, ed. Dinah Maria Mulock Craik (London: Macmillan, 1913).

24 My reading is especially indebted to Ruth B. Bottigheimer's "Tale Spinners: Submerged Voices in Grimms' Fairy Tales," *New German Critique* 27 (1982): 141–50.

25 Pedro Almodóvar, in Emanuel Levy, "'Talk to Her': Interview with Almodóvar – Part 2," at http://emanuellevy.com/comment/talk-to-her-interview-with-almodovar-part-2. Retrieved July 27, 2014.

26 Charles Perrault, "Sleeping Beauty [*La belle au bois dormant*]," in *Great Fairy Tale Tradition*, ed. Zipes, 688–95, at 690.

27 *Ibid.*, 681.

28 Propp, *Morphology*, 24.

29 Giambattista Basile, "Sun, Moon, and Talia [*Sole, Luna, e Talia*]," in *Great Fairy Tale Tradition*, ed. Zipes, 685–8, at 685–6. Further references will be given in the text.

30 Likewise in the Grimms' version, as Maria Tatar observes, in *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales* (New York: Norton, 2002), 98, n. 6: "Sleeping Beauty's curiosity, her desire to see…behind the door and her fascination with the spindle, gets her into trouble. By contrast, the prince

is rewarded for his curiosity, which takes the form of the desire to find the fabled castle."

31 Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1983), 48.

32 My terminology derives from Lucien Dällenbach's landmark study of the types of *mise en abyme*, in *The Mirror in the Text*, trans. Jeremy Whiteley with Emma Hughes (University of Chicago Press, 1989): the prospective type reflects "the story to come"; the retrospective, "the story already completed" (60).

33 Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 93.

34 Despina Kakoudaki, "World without Strangers: The Poetics of Coincidence in Pedro Almodóvar's *Talk to Her*," *Camera Obscura* 23, 2.68 (2008): 1–39, at 28.

35 Further complicating this chronology, *The Shrinking Lover* is a supposedly early (but factually belated) version of Jack Arnold's 1957 movie, *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, in which combined exposure to radioactive ocean mists and household insecticides rearranges the molecular structure of the protagonist's body.

36 José Arroyo, "Pedro Almodóvar," Interview at the NFT (National Film Theatre), *The Guardian*, available at www.theguardian.com/film/2002/jul/31/features.pedroalmodovar. Retrieved June 27, 2014.

37 Benigno's narration has been read as indicating a future event: "we sense some unease as Benigno begins to form the intention to consummate his love of Alicia, something that clearly happens as he is…recounting the movie" (Robert B. Pippin, "Devils and Angels in Almodóvar's *Talk to Her*," in *Talk to Her*, ed. A. W. Eaton [London: Routledge, 2009], 40); and conversely, as exposing a past or ongoing action: "when we scrutinize the

film's internal timelines, and realize that Alicia is already pregnant when Benigno's indirect confession takes place, it becomes clear that these important visual clues (sexual imagery in *The Shrinking Lover* …) occur at a temporal disjunction from the events they symbolize" (Kakoudaki, "World without Strangers," 23).

38 On the literary references interwoven throughout *Talk to Her*, see Rebecca Naughten, "Comatose Women in 'El Bosque': Sleeping Beauty and Other Literary Motifs in Pedro Almodóvar's *Hable con ella*," *Studies in Hispanic Cinemas* 3, 2 (2006): 77–88. Marsha Kinder focuses on intra-textual allusions within his oeuvre in "All about the Brothers: Retroseriality in Almodóvar's Cinema," in *All about Almodóvar: A Passion for Cinema*, ed. Brad Epps and Despina Kakoudaki (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 267–94, and in "Reinventing the Motherland: Almodóvar's Brain-Dead Trilogy," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 5, 3 (2004): 245–60.

39 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," in *Essays and Reviews* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1984), 13–25, at 19.

40 Almodóvar, "'Talk to Her,'" 13.

4 Fairy-tale adaptations and economies of desire

Cristina Bacchilega

The concept of intertextuality is key to approaching fairy tales in a folklore and literature framework and, even more broadly, in a web of cultural practices that crosses media, genres, and languages. Tales mingle with one another, anticipating, evoking, interrupting, and supporting one another in unpredictable ways that have to do with each teller's and the storytelling's situation and purposes, the teller's story chest, the various discourses in which the tales participate, and the narratives that listeners/readers/viewers bring to them as well. Thus, if we follow Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva, intertextuality is not a dialogue of fixed texts or meanings, but a multivocal process of meaning-making that is activated as an utterance or tale is, within specific situations, inhabited by and conversing with other tales as well as multiple fictional and non-fictional texts. This is how people and stories work for, with, and on one another – whether this engagement with social and discursive contexts, past and present narrative traditions, and shaping of the future is conscious or not.

In this chapter, I approach fairy tales in specific intertextual relations that, drawing on two different critical traditions, I refer to as "hypertextual." On the one hand, for narratologist Gérard Genette, hypertextuality is the grafting of a text onto another, a process that in simple or complex ways results in the imitation or transformation of the older or anterior text into a hypertext.[1] Linda Hutcheon takes the "palimpsestuous" relationship inherent in Genette's hypertextuality to define adaptation as "an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works" that involves re-interpretation, re-creation, and often remediation (that is, recoding across media).[2] So a hypertextual form of intertextuality, in narrative studies, names a one-on-one relationship of adaptation between an existing and a new narrative text: The *Aeneid* and Joyce's *Ulysses* are different kinds of hypertexts of the *Odyssey* (these are Genette's examples); analogously, Angela Carter's "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon" and "The Tiger's Bride" can be read as hypertexts of "Beauty and the Beast."[3] On the other hand, a different understanding of hypertextuality has come to the foreground in the digital

age, where computer-mediated texts that are interactively linked to others via a network of references are called “hypertexts” and conceptualized at the convergence of multiple nodes and networks independently of a linear connection. In its “montage-like textuality,” the computer-mediated hypertext “has the capacity to emphasize intertextuality in a way that page-bound text in books cannot,”[4] but it is important to note that this is a matter of emphasis and that in practice this understanding of hypertextuality resonates strongly with how many folklorists and fairy-tale scholars approach folk and fairy tales. Rather than being identified with an original or single text, each tale participates in a web of variously linked texts. A folktale or fairy-tale hypertext then is both an adaptation of a specific narrative text *and* its unpredictably interactive participation in much larger narrative and discursive networks where there is no single source or trajectory.

Drawing on such expansive and hypertextual understanding of intertextuality, I have found it generally productive to read fairy tales as participating in a web of production and reception where not only are oral and written texts connected, but translations, retellings, adaptations, critical interpretations, and relocations are entangled with one another. Here, I will read one fairy tale, “Snow White and Rose Red,” and adaptations of it that engage in reflective curiosity in order to gain further insight into the tale’s gendered dynamics of acculturation and economies of desire and to suggest methodologically how we, as readers and scholars of fairy tales, can learn from adapters who take an activist stance towards the stories they retell. While I do not believe that fairy tales speak to what’s possible only or primarily having to do with gender and sexuality, that is my focus here.

To clarify what I mean by “activist adaptations,” which I discuss more fully in *Fairy Tales Transformed?*, these are retellings in different media that take a questioning stance towards their pre-texts, and/or take an activist stance towards the fairy tale’s hegemonic uses in popular culture, and/or instigate readers/viewers/listeners to engage with the genre as well as with the world with a transformed sense of possibility.[5] Whether they spring from “what if?” scenarios, dwell on the constructedness – material and ideological – of fantasy, or expand on queer images, activist adaptations reflect and speculate on the tale’s magic in ways that do not

necessarily destroy it but do query it. The adaptations I will discuss may not each accomplish or set out to accomplish all of this, but they do engage in a reflective curiosity that opens up channels for wonder as we revisit "Snow White and Rose Red," and they instigate in their audiences a desire for social transformations having, in the case of this tale, to do with gender and sexuality. While weighing into and potentially transforming my reading of "Snow White and Rose Red," these millennial and early twenty-first-century adaptations are also symptomatic of a post-"Angela Carter generation" culture whereby the fairy tale's gender and sexual politics are investigated rather than universalized or simplified.

There is something refreshingly carefree about the girls' experience in "Snow White and Rose Red," a well-known fairy tale from the Brothers Grimm's nineteenth-century collection, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* or *Children's and Household Tales*, that I have been rereading in Maria Tatar's recent English-language translation. This tale does not depict children trapped in a dysfunctional family, as "Hansel and Gretel" does, and its young heroes do not leave home because of incest threats, as in "All Kinds of Fur."[6] Rather, while it is mentioned that their mother is widowed and poor, the two sisters are cheerful and comfortable in their home. This sense of belonging as well as their good nature are further poetically established by the imagery of the two rosebushes, "one with white roses and the other with red," which thrive in front of their cottage and which, we are told, the two girls resemble: Snow White "quiet and gentle" in her candor, Rose Red more animated and preferring "to frolic in the fields and on the meadows, looking for flowers and catching butterflies."[7] Even more unusual in the Grimms' fairy tales is the lack of competition between the two sisters whose affinity and emotional closeness are instead asserted by the narrator at the start of the tale and confirmed by the characters' actions and speech at every step of the plot. Their temperamental difference is not the marker of rivalry or a binary opposition, but of their complementarity; and because she is always with Snow White, Rose Red's propensity for wandering and gathering flowers has not the same valence as Little Red Riding Hood's erring off the path.

When the sisters are in the woods, in fact, nothing could be more different from their experiences than Red Riding Hood's dangerously seductive encounter with the wolf:

> They would often go into the woods to pick red berries, and they never had to worry about the animals, for they made friends with them right away. Rabbits nibbled cabbage leaves from their hands; deer would graze beside them; stags bounded right by them; and birds would perch on branches near them and sing all the songs they knew. No harm ever came to the girls. If it got late while they were in the forest, they would lie down next to each other on the moss and sleep until dawn. Their mother knew what they were doing and never worried about them.
>
> (243–4)

These girls are not only comfortable in the natural world, which is not uncommon in folk and fairy tales; they are at home in the woods, as represented in an idyllic tableau that almost anticipates the popular song-and-dance scene featuring young Aurora in Walt Disney's 1959 animated classic, *Sleeping Beauty*. But there are differences: Disney's princess is an only child and already a young woman, while the sisters Snow White and Rose Red are old enough to read out loud "when all the work was done" (243) but are most often referred to as "girls" (245, 249) and "children" (245, 246). Furthermore, in the Disney film, fantasizing about romance in the song, "Once upon a Dream," is already part of Aurora's harmonious relationship with nature. Indeed, it is there, in the woods, that Prince Philip comes upon Aurora and, overcoming her initial resistance, inserts himself into her dreamscape and life. As I write this chapter, a parodic image from this *Sleeping Beauty* scene is circulating on the Internet with the caption, "DISNEY: / Teaching you not to talk to strangers, / Unless they're hot." While he succeeds thanks to subterfuge and to what my students (with and at times without my guidance) recognize as stalking behavior, the prince is quickly accepted as no stranger partly because of the amused approval of the owl and other friendly animals, which reassures Aurora and the spectators that he is no predator. This Disney scene thus suggests how instant heterosexual attraction is not just romantic, but natural. In contrast, in the Grimms' "Snow White and Rose Red" tale, the sisters' carefree being in nature is guaranteed by a guardian angel whose vigilance protects them from their own naïveté when they inadvertently fall asleep near a precipice: They are young and good

children who stay together, and “their mother knew what they were doing and never worried about them” (244).

These girls first encounter a clearly masculine presence in the form not of a prince, but a bear, and what’s more, in their own home. Despite their charmed experience in the woods, the two sisters are frightened, as are the more domesticated animals in the cottage, by the large animal’s intrusion: “It was a bear, and he thrust his big black head right through the doorway. Rose Red screamed and backed off. The little lamb bleated, the dove fluttered into the air, and Snow White hid behind her mother’s bed” (245). Unlike Disney’s Aurora, these girls are not alone with the stranger, and it is with their mother’s permission that he enters the cottage. The he-bear politely proclaims his need for shelter from the bitter cold and insists that he means no harm. Reassured by his words, the mother invites him in and encourages her daughters to come out of hiding. The he-bear’s acceptance in the all-female home of Snow White and Rose Red, then, has the markings not of nature or naturalization, but of enchantment: This bear is no speechless animal, and the girls’ mother is exceedingly kind and hospitable. When a little later that evening the two girls have become quite used to “their awkward guest” and “tug at his fur, walk on his back with their feet, and roll him back and forth” (145), this scene of domestic joy and rambunctious play reads like a homey fantasy, parading to its readers the hyperfictionality of this fairy tale’s storyworld.

Exercising suspension of disbelief – whether it concerns love at first sight or talking animals – is key to the experience of fairy tales. The coherence and sparkling clarity of fairy-tale storyworlds lies in their capacity to elicit wonder and marvel in audiences, while never raising questions among the characters concerning the plausibility or possibility of what they experience: the talking bear in this case, but also the ever-beautiful appearance of the “dead” Snow White and Sleeping Beauty, and even the talking head of the heroine’s dead horse in “The Goose Girl.” However, just as listeners and readers of fairy tales agree to adhere to genre expectations in order to enjoy the marvelous ride, for many this pleasure turns into the desire to retell the tale, a desire that, in some cases at least, has less to do with sustaining that suspension of disbelief than it does with engaging in curiosity and reflection. As scholars we do this too, and so do adapters. It is no surprise then that in fairy-tale studies we have

learned so much from Angela Carter's 1979 fairy-tale experimentation with and deconstruction of the genre in *The Bloody Chamber*, or that since then the conversation between creative and scholarly interpretations of fairy tales has been so fertile.[8]

When it comes to fairy tales and their adaptations, "Snow White and Rose Red" is an interesting case in that it is itself the Grimms' adaptation of Caroline Stahl's "Der undankbare Zwerg," published in an 1818 collection of tales for children. It is likely that the Grimms took this tale to come from the oral tradition: The brothers, who tended to excise a tale from their *Children's and Household Tales* once they realized its literary status, openly referred to Stahl's book as their source for several tales, and the presence of the dwarf would have suggested older and oral traditions. Nowadays, however, "Der undankbare Zwerg" is deemed a literary tale that only circulated in different languages and in the oral tradition following the success of the Grimms' *Children's and Household Tales*.[9] Thinking of adaptations, I see this history as significant not because it establishes a literary source for "Snow White and Rose Red," but because Stahl's tale adopts – as we shall see – generic conventions that draw on folkloric motifs and patterns, and adapts them for children according to early nineteenth-century ideologies. It is itself a generic adaptation that went unrecognized as such, thus functioning as a pretext that is not an original, but a link in an intertextual web that has no one point of origin.

Stahl's tale – which I have read in Jack Zipes's English-language translation, titled "The Ungrateful Dwarf" and published in the 2001 *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition* – is brief and focused on poor/rich, grateful/ungrateful oppositions that are played out in the encounters between the two sisters, Snow White and Rose Red, and an "ugly" and "impolite" dwarf in the woods.[10] The girls, as in the Grimms' tale, come to the dwarf's rescue at his request more than once, freeing him each time by cutting his beard shorter and shorter, which saves him but also can be perceived as symbolic emasculation. Not only does the dwarf show bad manners, as Stahl's narrator remarks, by not thanking them or sharing his riches of pearls and jewels, but when the girls find him in the final instance "in the paws of a bear, who was about to mash him," the dwarf offers the bear his treasure and the girls as a more "juicy and tender" meal. This bear – clearly not of the talking kind we meet in the Grimm tale –

pays no attention to the dwarf's words, eats him "skin and hair," and departs (773). The girls take the sacks filled with gold and jewels to their parents, thus providing the family (including their unnamed siblings) with castles, land, beautiful clothes, and even education. Unlike the dwarf, Stahl's Snow White and Rose Red are little people who show their gratitude and reward their parents for having cared for the children in dire times.

While the Brothers Grimm themselves would not have described their rewriting of "The Ungrateful Dwarf" as an adaptation, they proceeded, as any adapter does (and, no matter how anachronistically, I view them as such), to retell "The Ungrateful Dwarf" by repeating without replicating and in ways that narratively "redistribute energies."[11] Gone is the straightforward moral, while the spirituality and the poetry take off, drawing on the two girls' names, the symbolic power of the rose, and the colors; and the sisters' affinity with the bear is brought to the fore, both domesticated and romanticized.[12] In the Grimm tale, Snow White and Rose Red are no ordinary poor sisters: They enjoy (super)natural protection, they are already educated (reading is an everyday pleasure in the cottage) and productive (they take care of the house, they catch fish and pick berries for dinner, and they spin), and their "nature" is as noble as the he-bear's since he is in this tale a prince whom the greedy dwarf had enchanted. "The bear was the king of the beasts in early medieval lore, the strongest and heaviest of animals in western forests, and in consequence an emblem of power in feudal heraldry; it was the totemic royal symbol of the Celtic and Germanic West and dominated, alongside the wolf, the oral literature of forest peoples," Marina Warner reminds us.[13]

Re-spun and eventually published in the Grimms' 1833 and 1837 editions of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, the tale is (as the new title announces) centered on the sisters and the domestic harmony of their world, which the snarling, angry, and rude dwarf can only temporarily disrupt before the bear gives "the wicked creature a single blow with his paw" (249) and restores balance as well as his own human, indeed princely, form. As Rölleke notes, the sisters' devotion to one another plays a key role in the tale and mirrors that of the two Grimms. Significantly, the ending includes a proper marriage for both sisters (as the prince's brother conveniently appears)[14] and the transplanting of the rosebushes to their

new home, where their mother also enjoys “peace and happiness” (250) and, of course, great wealth. This adaptation is symptomatic, then, of the Grimms’ personal histories and close fraternal bond, and, for the most part, of the ideologies of gender and class that their collection of tales began to serve as they redefined it, over the years and in varied editions, as literature for children.

While the romanticized marriage to a prince matches other endings in the Grimms’ collection, the benign role of the mother in the tale stands out. Not only are the girls happy in the widow’s home (with such circumstances being specific to the Grimm tale only, not to Stahl’s), but the mother-daughter relationship remains positive throughout the tale. Mutual trust seems to govern this relationship: The girls do not question what their mother teaches them, and she approves of the sisters’ desire never to leave each other, encouraging them to “always share” (243). This harmony of the mother with her daughters plays a significant part in allowing the girls to lead their charmed existence: She does not worry about them, gives them freedom to explore the woods, and even encourages them to welcome the he-bear. When he comes into their home, the girls, unlike Aurora, have no expectation of romance. But, as his verse indicates when the children play a bit roughly with him near the fireplace – “Snow White and Rose Red, / You’ll beat your suitor till he’s dead” (245) – the he-bear does. And I would argue so does the mother implicitly show an understanding of how it is beneficial for her daughters to interact with a polite and noble masculine being, whatever his appearance, and to do so with her approval. Because they are, in fact, no strangers to the bear, the girls are perfectly safe later when the dwarf entices him to make a meal of them: Like the girl in one of Carter’s “Little Red Riding Hood” retellings, Snow White and Rose Red are “nobody’s meat.”[15] However, unlike that girl who in recognizing her own carnal desires chooses the company of wolves, the sisters in the Grimm tale are – thanks to the seamless continuity of their nature and nurture experiences – royal marriage material.

It is understandable that the mother who has enabled the blossoming of these two perfect roses participates in the rewarding ending where (with the exception of the greedy dwarf) they all live together enjoying riches as well as the beauty of the white and red flowers. As it is also no surprise,

given its harmonious imagery and feel, that “Snow White and Rose Red” has become – as seen in its publication with Gustav Tenggren’s illustrations in various editions including the 1957 Little Golden Books series as well as in its success in attracting various illustrators – a particularly popular and edifying children’s story that parents can tell or read to enchant their daughters and sons. And here I mean enchantment less innocently, as consisting of a spellbinding discipline that effectively acculturates the child to normative behaviors, since after all the mother’s enchantment yields perfectly docile and well-mannered young women.

This insidiously effortless regulatory power that fairy tales for children, especially the Grimms’ and Disney’s, exercise has been amply discussed in fairy-tale studies. What interests me in the case of this charming tale is that the protagonists do not ever have to overcome a conflict of their own in order to succeed because the figure of the mother – all too often missing (i.e., dead) if she is “good” in the Grimms’ collection – is powerfully and benignly at work to spin the spell. This is in contrast to the stepmother figure, who in fairy tales like “Snow White” is a powerful plotter and maker of spells, but in order to preserve her own place in the king’s favor (the patriarchal world) acts in opposition to the young heroine, thus becoming the villain who must in fairy-tale logic fail. I am suggesting instead that in the “Snow White and Rose Red” storyworld, making one’s place in the world fantastically coexists with maintaining the secure atmosphere of the parental home because the mother is never the girls’ opponent. Also marking this continuity, the bear, who becomes the princely husband, is a playful father figure in the initial domestic scene near the fire; this kind of Oedipal imagery is not unusual in romance literature for young girls of the *Daddy-Long-Legs* type. What is remarkable here is that the mother and her protection do not have to be left behind. Motivated by no intergenerational conflicts of desire or will, it is as if in the Grimms’ “Snow White and Rose Red,” the woods, the home, the mother, and the bear are all a harmonious one, and the fantasy of remaining in the womb can be held *along with* the one of moving out into the world.

If this is the case, however, I want also to suggest that “Snow White and Rose Red” delivers no simple or typically hegemonic message concerning gendered subjectivities in fairy tales. Sure, heterosexual marriage, if not

romance, is the naturalized norm. The prince's appearance both as a polite, gentle bear and as a "handsome man, dressed in gold" (250) conveniently attests in the marriage economy to the conflation of his noble inner nature and his social class. But the girls do not have to leave their mother or each other in the process: They act, grow, and experience the world in relation to one another first and foremost, and, as the tale's ending indicates, continuously throughout their lives. The sisters marry, but they share that experience with each other. Their mother may have facilitated their eligibility, but she also sees no need for married life to replace sisterly bonds. These female fairy-tale protagonists are not, as subjects in the making, dependent on males. What does this mean to the economy of gendered desires in the storyworld and the tale of "Snow White and Rose Red"?

No single answer emerges. If we stay with the mother as the positive narrative motor or spellbinding plotter, the dwarf is *her* direct opponent, for he controls the life of the prince (forcing him into the wilderness and testing his character) and exemplifies a culture that greedily accumulates natural resources (the gems) and also – since the dwarf, in his various predicaments, symbolically struggles with the powers of gravity and earth, the flow of time and water, the unpredictability of flight and air – actively forces itself on nature by challenging its laws. The dwarf is the one who sees fit to trade the girls in the eat-or-be-eaten economy in which he operates and to which he believes he has reduced the prince as well. Whether he uses words to insult and demean the well-meaning sisters or his powers to take the prince's human appearance away from him, violence and greed are the dwarf's code. As the only other male in the tale, like the bear he provides a distorted or grotesque image of manliness, but one that does not adhere to the laws of nature or the rules of domesticity. Other than his interest in (unlawfully) acquiring property, there is nothing proper about the dwarf, and I cannot imagine the girls' mother letting him into their home.[16] The bear, then, who has enjoyed her hospitality and a playful courtship with her daughters, does more than save himself when eliminating the rapacious out-of-control "monstrous" male in the storyworld and within himself; he does the mother's bidding as well. When retold this way, like Angela Carter's retellings of "Cinderella" in "Ashputtle *or* The Mother's Ghost," "Snow White and Rose Red" is driven

by the mother's desire.[17] Surprisingly she need not be dead to exercise her powers over the younger characters and their future, and perhaps not surprisingly her feminine economy is in collusion with a domesticity that goes hand in hand not only with the lawful accumulation of riches but also with heteronormativity.

Margo Lanagan's 2008 fantasy and fairy-tale novel, *Tender Morsels*, adapts "Snow White and Rose Red," paying particular attention to the powers of the mother figure and the enchantment that the representation of her girls' happy lives conveys. This enchanting effect is perhaps best expressed in the novel in the words of character and first-person narrator Davit Ramstrong. Ramstrong has suddenly and mysteriously transformed from a man wearing a bearskin for the ritual Day of the Bear in his hometown into a large bear; as this transformation is recalled in his monologue, he inhabits a bear's body and senses, with no ability to speak, but retains at least some of his human thoughts. Like the bear in the Grimms' tale, he knocks on the door seeking refuge in Snow White and Rose Red's cottage, and their mother grants him entry. Retrospectively, he describes his evenings there as "equal parts laughter and gentleness," concluding: "I was enchanted…Such children I had never known, so happy, unbowed, and unbeaten. Free as the forest they were growing, but they were by no means wild."[18] Everything in this world feels comfortable, and just as the children are safe in the woods, the mother exudes serenity. In the world of the Grimms' fairy tale, this experience of enchantment or magic goes unquestioned, but in Lanagan's novel the characters are aware of and actively engaged in "magicking," as the willful use of spells and rituals to control natural and supernatural forces.

Ramstrong has been magicked, but what he, Liga (the mother), and her daughters do not know is that their comfort and safety are wholesale the product of magicking. The tranquil world in which the bear and the girls play together under the smiling gaze of the mother is itself the product of enchantment. This world, as characters and readers discover later after several episodes of "*twixting* worlds" (79) where large- and small-sized humans are transported back and forth, is the cotton one Liga had wished for as a girl of fifteen who, first habitually abused by her brutish widower father and then gang raped by teenagers from the village, finds herself the child-like mother of two little girls. That wish for safety was granted, as

Liga contemplated suicide at the edge of a cliff, by some magic force or a "moon-child" (51) that recalls the Grimms' guardian angel. Liga is aware of how changed her life is, of course, but does not realize for quite some time that the world in which she is raising Branza and Urdda is fictive in relation to the one where she grew up. Miss Dance, the most powerful of the sorceresses or wise women in the novel, later explains to Branza (the Snow White character) that this dream world was "the best place [for Liga] to raise her babies in: a kind world with no enemies, gentle upon children and full of natural wonders and pleasant society" (355). As she expands on the fantasy of "Snow White and Rose Red," that of being in a womb-like world while at the same time moving on if not out into the world, Lanagan attunes readers to the defensive and healing powers of such a fantasy in relation to the regime of violence with which real-world women and fairy-tale heroines all too often contend.

Lanagan's complex weaving of the different ways in which Liga, Branza, Urdda (the Rose Red character), and others inhabit this fantasy world also alerts readers to the cost or loss that its fictionality requires and to the responsibilities adults, as world- and story-makers, have to others. In Liga's dream world, where her daughters grow free and safe, the villagers are only "ever-pleasant facsimiles of themselves" (344). And the idyllic tableau of the sisters roaming free in the woods is unnatural not only because all the animals are gentle but also because it is unchanging and dependent on their mother's desire, not their own desires or needs. The enchantment frays as portals open unexpectedly and, unbeknownst to Liga, Branza and Urdda find themselves meeting strangers and dangers as well as, in Urdda's case, becoming curious about the other world they intuit exists. Urdda manages to leave, and eventually, thanks to the wise woman's magic, brings her mother and older sister back to what Miss Dance calls the "true" world. As Branza and Liga become stronger in a world that does not exclude commerce, fear, knowledge, pain, or romance, they realize what Urdda has sensed all along: More than being comfortable, the point is to be alive to the possibilities within oneself and with others; or as Miss Dance says to Branza, "you are a living creature, born to make a real life, however it cracks your heart" (356–7).

Lanagan's novel prompts me to ask: what of the girls' desire then in the Grimms' "Snow White and Rose Red" as well as in its other recent

adaptations? And should we look at the two sisters as one, or as animated by distinct desires? When in the tale Snow White says, “We shall never leave each other,” Rose Red promptly answers, “Not as long as we live” (243). In the Grimms’ enchanted storyworld, their wish comes true; but isn’t this wish also the articulation of non-normative desires, both narrative, as I noted earlier, and sexual? In the essay “The Lost Sister: Lesbian Eroticism and Female Empowerment in ‘Snow White and Rose Red,’” Andrew Friedenthal successfully foregrounds how in contrast to the iconic “Snow White,” the protagonists of “Snow White and Rose Red” are “active and adventurous and perform outside the bounds of the patriarchal ideal for well-behaved, demure girls”; they enjoy intimate female bonds; and they engage in playful flirtation with the he-bear. Not only are their desires active, but, Friedenthal argues, “the entire tale centers on a series of queer images and symbols” that suggest homoeroticism and a “simmering sexuality.” Focusing on the red/white color symbolism in the tale, Friedenthal reads Rose Red as more transgressive and Snow White – whose attachment to and curiosity about the bear are salient markers of their dialogue as he leaves the cottage in spring – as more oriented toward heteronormativity. Drawing on the Grimms’ tale as well as adaptations of it in contemporary literature and popular culture, Friedenthal concludes that Rose Red is generally forgotten, while her sister lives on in the popular imagination, having become conflated with the all-heteronormative and iconic Snow White of the tale with the nice seven dwarves, the jealous stepmother, and naturally the prince; an exception to this rule, the interaction between Rose Red and Snow White in the comics series *Fables* by Bill Willingham, pointedly calls attention to this hierarchy of sexual and narrative desires.[19]

Bolstering Friedenthal’s transgressive reading of the two sisters in the Grimms’ tale are other adaptations that underscore Snow White and Rose Red’s intimate bond – its queerness tugging at the tale’s heteronormative ending – as well as their differences more subtly and open-endedly than *Fables* does. In Francesca Lia Block’s short story “Rose” (2000), for instance, the sisters as children are very close (“When Rose White and Rose Red are little, they tell each other, We will never need anyone else ever, we are going to do everything together…We are complete”), and while they complement one another (“Rose Red gives Rose White courage and Rose White gives Rose Red peace”) Rose Red is bolder, more sensual,

and her “voice evokes volcanoes, salt spray, cool tunnels of air, hot plains, redolence, blossoms.”[20] There is no mother in this adaptation, and it is the girls who seek refuge in a cottage one night when they are lost in the forest. The bear is there, in the tidy cottage, wounded; and as they bandage and care for him, something new happens to Rose White: “she does not want to share [her thought] with the person who has known every single thing about her since the day they were born” (143). Readers as well as Rose Red the character are quick to pick up on what will happen next as the bear heals and eventually transforms in the young women’s eyes into a man. “When Rose Red sets out to leave she [Rose White] holds his hand and lets her go” (149).

Written for YA readers, “Rose” does not openly take sides with either heteronormative or queer and counterhegemonic paths of existence, but it does in its ending depart from the Grimms’ version, where those sisterly ties and their intimacy remain intact once heterosexual desire or the marriages intervene. In Block’s tale, “Rose White wants to tell [Rose Red], maybe he has a friend, you have to stay with us, things don’t have to change that much, but she doesn’t say anything. She knows that things have changed” (149). The external narrator gives us limited access to the sisters’ thoughts, just enough to sense the import of the transformation that creates a rift between Rose and Rose. Before congratulating the couple, “Rose Red swallows a trickle of salt in her throat,” a small recognition of her feeling of loss; at the same time, when Rose White “lets her go” (149), there is perhaps an inkling of Rose Red’s newfound freedom. Rose Red’s desire is not narratively pursued, but it is clearly and somewhat painfully marked as severed from Rose White’s.

Quite different is Erin Belieu’s take in the brief 2003 poem “Rose Red,”[21] which seems to ignore the sisters’ intimate bond and focuses first on what Rose Red did not desire (“She never wanted the troll, /…She never wanted the prince’s brother, /…And she did not want the bear”) and then on what she did crave: “What she wanted, of course, was her own place in the forest.” The gap on the page between this line and the stanza that follows suggests there are many ways to interpret what “her own place in the forest” means, and we can let our minds as readers imagine at least some of them. But in the poem, this place is “where she would take the flowering trees / that grew outside her mother’s bedroom window – /…/

and plant them on opposite sides of her cottage." The plants have red blossoms, "with delicate, hooked thorns," but, of course, there are white ones as well, so we know that her sister is hardly forgotten. Would Rose Red have enjoyed self-sufficiency in her own place in the forest, "watching each bloom fall as summer spoiled them," or would this be a space for Roses to bloom together? The poem does not answer, but the "simmering sexuality" that Friedenthal sensed in the Grimms' tale is at work here too. Returning to the Grimms' tale, Belieu's speculative poem addresses the dissatisfaction at least some experience when nothing different is imagined for Rose Red's happy ending in "Snow White and Rose Red," and it also subtly adds to the rose symbolism.

Another multivalent symbol that is relevant to the gendered economy of desire in "Snow White and Rose Red" is that of the he-bear. In addition to his "king of the animals" nobility in Northern European countries and his furry masculinity, what is notable about the bear is how we anthropomorphize him and tend to see him as a "wild man." Omnivorous and capable of walking upright, the bear enjoys honey but is also, when enraged, capable of great violence, sometimes representing a brutish male sexuality. In the Grimms' tale, as previously discussed, the he-bear is no beast despite his appearance. By hibernating in the widows' cottage near the hearth and playing "nicely" with the girls, he reveals his desire not only for shelter but also for the company of humans. In offering him hospitality, the mother takes him in as guest – meaning, not yet as part of the family – and as hostage to her domesticating rules. The Otherness of the he-bear in "Snow White and Rose Red" is also marked by his dark fur; he is not the white bear of the Norse tale "East of the Sun and West of the Moon," who has riches and a magical castle, and already qualifies as a mysterious but more socially acceptable "animal bridegroom."

Applying the pressure of irony to the image of the he-bear in fairy tales as both animal and human, Theodora Goss's 2006 short story "Sleeping with Bears"[22] focuses on the wedding ritual to underscore how sexuality and otherness are connected in "Snow White and Rose Red," but also in "Beauty and the Beast" tales. Framed by two public texts – "The Invitation" sent to the wedding guests and "The Announcement" in the local paper – "Sleeping with Bears" consists of first-person commentary given by Miss Blanche Barlow, the bride's younger sister, on Miss Rosalie

Barlow and Mr. T. C. Ursus's wedding. The ceremony is presumably held in Virginia in the late 1980s (since there are references to Arvonia and Buckingham County, and Rosalie has experience with Jane Fonda jazzercise). Taking a tongue-in-cheek approach to the fairy tale's suspension of disbelief, the narrator presents the groom and his family as actual bears, but there is no transformation or shedding of bearskin; at the same time, the bride's mother's reaction to first meeting Mr. Ursus suggests a racial prejudice reminiscent of the satiric scenario of the film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* (1967):

> When she first brought him home, Mom hid in the bathroom. Dad had to tell her repeatedly that bears don't eat people. That they're really quite gentle, except when their cubs are threatened. That they're probably more afraid of you than you are of them.
>
> Still, Mom sat at the edge of her chair, moving the roast beef around on her plate, not reassured to see [him] eating only peas and carrots, mashed potatoes.
>
> (88–93)

What Blanche, the Snow White character, is curious about is why her sister Rosie "decided to marry a bear" (86). As Blanche observes and participates in the wedding, she comments on the differences in class, education, income, dress, eating habits, and dancing abilities between her family and the groom's; readers do not learn much about the bears, but we get a sense of the small-town mentality of the humans and of significant social markers in the lives of Blanche's mother and sister (pageant winner, cheerleader, graduate of Sweet Briar College, homemaker).

By the end of the wedding, Blanche is enjoying "rolling around in the vestry" with F. B. (Frog Biter) Ursus, the groom's younger brother and an excellent waltzer; and based on this experience, she claims "And I finally understand why my sister is marrying a bear" (92). But as a narrator, she has already proven her limited knowledge, and what she gathers about her sister's motivation may or may not be accurate, especially since what Blanche tells us about her own desire to be with F. B. is complicated: "I want to sleep with you, I say, and I mean through the winter, with the snow above us and the branches covered with ice, cracking in the wind…But he

takes it the other way, and that's all right too. His curved claws are good at climbing trees, and unbuttoning dresses" (93). By offering a front- and backstage view of the wedding, Goss's story not only punctures the credibility of the fairy-tale wedding as happy ending, but invites further investigation of the transgressive image of the bear among humans in "Snow White and Rose Red" as well as of the intricate dynamics of sexual and social desires.

Within the current proliferation of fairy-tale adaptations and their multimedial currency, this chapter discusses a small sampling of "Snow White and Rose Red" adaptations. My point here has not been to survey adaptations, but to learn from them as hypertexts, especially in relation to the tale's gender dynamics and economies of desire, and to engage with some methodological questions. Many adaptations and translations of "Snow White and Rose Red" in the broader genre of children's literature favor the reproduction of the Grimms' safe charm. However, while this fairy tale continues to enchant children and adults, more activist adaptations for adults and young adults attune us to how the transformative power of its imagery far exceeds that of its plot. And if we revisit "Snow White and Rose Red" under the influence of contemporary critical interpretations of fairy tales and, even more significantly, of such activist adaptations, the relational network of desires within the Grimms' storyworld does not straightforwardly match up with the regulatory transmission of gender roles that fairy tales hegemonically serve in popular culture. Within these early twenty-first-century adaptations, Rose Red as the bolder or more transgressive sister gets more attention as a character whose desires are not conflated with her sister's – for instance, while in *Tender Morsels* Branza chooses to marry Ramstrong, Urdda chooses knowledge and apprentices with Miss Dance. That said, in most cases heteronormativity continues to trump other narrative possibilities.

More generally, by approaching a fairy tale such as "Snow White and Rose Red" via its adaptations, I pursued the following propositions. One, while historically, culturally, and generically we do well to resist confusing them with one another, fairy tales and their adaptations are not read (or written, told, and received) in isolation of one another. Neither does their production or reception refer back to one center or version as *the* norm. A Sardinian oral version of "Snow White and Rose Red,"

published in the 1950s, portrays the dwarf as the villain because *he* wants to eat the two girls, and in the end the prince marries Orrosa (the Rose Red character), not Bianca.[23] Two, within this hypertextual web of intertextuality, the relationship of adaptations to their pre-texts is not insulated from ideological and material forces. And three, to read this relationship as a *reciprocal* querying that works to various ideological effects can bolster our sense of the transformative force of fairy tales, at the same time that it speaks to the symptomatic nature of adaptations.

Notes

1 Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes: La Littérature au second degré* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982), 11–14.

2 Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 7.

3 However, since even Genette acknowledges that a hypertext or adaptation can be understood (though quite likely not fully appreciated) without any knowledge of the text it revisits and should be read at the intersection of various kinds of intertextuality, hypertextuality need not be restricted to the exclusive connection of one text transposing or transforming another. Genette proposes five types of "transtextuality" (what other narratologists would call intertextuality): intertextuality more narrowly defined as the citation of or allusion to other texts; paratextuality as the generic and conventional ensemble (title, preface, epigraph, illustration, advertisement) that surrounds and introduces a text, thus offering, by way of association with other texts and genres, a key to reading it; metatextuality as historical, generic, and critical commentary; architextuality as a more abstract relationship between the text and its audiences' horizons of expectations, which change in different historical and cultural contexts; and of course hypertextuality (*Palimpsestes*).

4 George P. Landow, *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006 [1992]), 55.

5 Cristina Bacchilega, *Fairy Tales Transformed? Twenty-First-Century Adaptations and the Politics of Wonder* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013).

6 "Snow White and Rose Red" is identified as "The Two Girls, the Bear, and the Dwarf" (ATU 426) in the Aarne-Thompson-Uther classification system with which folklorists across the world are familiar; see Hans-Jörg Uther, ed., *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography*, Folklore Fellows Communications, 3 vols. (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004), vol. I, 256. "Snow White and Rose Red" has no relation with the even more popular "Snow White" (ATU 709) in the Grimms' collection.

7 Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, "Snow White and Rose Red" (1833), trans. and ed. Maria Tatar, *The Grimm Reader: The Classic Tales of the Brothers Grimm* (New York: Norton, 2010), 243. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

8 See Stephen Benson, ed., *Contemporary Fiction and the Fairy Tale* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008); and Vanessa Joosen, *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales: An Intertextual Dialogue between Fairy-Tale Scholarship and Postmodern Retellings* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011).

9 I refer readers to the research of Germanists and Grimm scholars for supporting evidence: Jack Zipes, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm* (New York: Norton, 2001), 772; Hans Rölleke, "Mädchen und Bär," *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. VIII (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 1350; Johannes Bolte and Georg Polívka, "Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot," *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm* (Leipzig:

Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1918), vol. III, 259–60; Shawn C. Jarvis, "Stahl, Caroline (1776–1837)," in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*, ed. Donald Haase (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 917; Marijana Hameršak, "A Never Ending Story? Permutations of 'Snow White and Rose Red' Narrative and Its Research across Time and Space," *Narodna Umjetnost: Croatian Journal of Ethnology and Folklore Research* 48, 1 (2011): 147–60; and Hermann Bausinger, "Die moralischen Tiere," *Universitas* 45 (1990): 241–51.

10 Caroline Stahl, "The Ungrateful Dwarf," trans. and ed. Jack Zipes, in *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*, 772, 773. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

11 Robert Stam, "The Theory and Practice of Adaptation," in *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Adaptation*, ed. Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 46.

12 In Lotte Reiniger's silhouette film, *Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot* (UK: Primrose Production Team, 1953), the bear is reminiscent of a dog when he enters the cottage on all fours, and then he looks like a playful if large cat while playing with the girls and a ball of wool near the fireplace. When he leaves at the end of winter after their chaste courtship, however, he bows in a gentlemanly fashion to the girls and tells them he is an enchanted prince. As in her other silhouette animated fairy tales, Reiniger charges this charming atmosphere with sexually subtle and not-so-subtle visual puns when it comes to troublemakers like the dwarf, or villains (like the witch in her *Hansel and Gretel*).

13 Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), 300.

14 The final paragraph of the tale opens with this statement: "Snow White married the prince and Rose Red married his brother" (250). We are not told how much time passes between the bear's transformation back into prince and the weddings. For some illustrators, like Gustav Tenggren in

the popular *Tenggren's Snow White and Rose Red* (New York: Little Golden Book, 1957), the sisters are young women or at least teenagers throughout so that the marriage in the end is no incongruity, while for others, who visualize the girls as children, the Grimms' ending is more of a challenge.

15 Angela Carter, "The Company of Wolves," *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (New York: Penguin, 2011 [1979]), 151.

16 The 2012 live-action film for German television directed by Sebastian Grobler, *Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot* (Germany: Saxonia Media, 2012), includes a scene in which the dwarf in disguise approaches the yard surrounding the widow's cottage, but the rosebushes instantly grow to prevent him from entering what is clearly a protected space.

17 Angela Carter, "Ashputtle *or* The Mother's Ghost: Three Versions of One Story" (1987), *American Ghosts & Old World Wonders* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), 110–19.

18 Margo Lanagan, *Tender Morsels* (New York: Knopf, 2008), 127 and 128–9. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

19 Andrew J. Friedenthal, "The Lost Sister: Lesbian Eroticism and Female Empowerment in 'Snow White and Rose Red,'" in *Transgressive Tales: Queering the Grimms*, ed. Kay Turner and Pauline Greenhill (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012), 171, 166, 176.

20 Francesca Lia Block, "Rose," *The Rose and the Beast: Fairy Tales Retold* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 133, 135, 134. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

21 Erin Belieu, "Rose Red" [1995], in *The Poets' Grimm: 20th Century Poems from Grimm Fairy Tales*, ed. Jeanne Marie Beaumont and Claudia Carlson (Ashland, OR: Story Line Press, 2003), 159.

22 Theodora Goss, “Sleeping with Bears,” *In the Forest of Forgetting* (Gaithersburg: Prime Books, 2006), 85–93. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

23 Renato Aprile, *Indice delle fiabe popolari italiane di magia* (Florence: Olschki, 2000), vol. I, 779.

5 Fairy-tale symbolism

Francisco Vaz da Silva

A case for symbolic analysis

Vladimir Propp famously claimed in 1928 that all questions relating to the study of folktales ultimately lead to the problem of the "similarity of tales throughout the world." Short of tackling this behemoth of a problem, he addressed the subproblem of the similarity of all fairy tales. Propp successfully demonstrated that all fairy tales share a single abstract composition. However, he failed to address the variable contents that (as he admits) provide the fairy tale "its brilliance, charm, and beauty."[1] And the problem is, you cannot really explain the similarity of all fairy tales without addressing the variable contents. Folklore being the realm of variation, you always compare items that are both similar and different.

Therefore, the notion of "similarity" cannot be simply taken for granted. Rather, one must assess how similar is similar by means of analytical procedures. Then "similarity" becomes something you have to demonstrate. As you search for similarities among variants, you look for the shared properties of items that are empirically different. You look, in other words, for symbolic equivalences. Overall, the attempt to grasp symbolism involves a commitment to making sense of (apparent) nonsense, which is also a commitment to making unconscious webs of meanings conscious.

I have a keen interest in Freud's discovery that an unconscious symbolic mode of expression is to be found in dreams, fairy tales and myths, jokes, folk sayings and songs, poetic imagination, and colloquial usage of language. This insight is all the more remarkable in that Freud admitted that "it is not easy to account for this fact by the help of our psychological views." Acknowledging that his standard technique of dream interpretation leaves him "in the lurch" regarding symbols, Freud conjectured that symbols might be the "residues" of a "hypothetical 'primal language'" that provide "constant translations" – and he famously devised a set of ready-made symbolic translations to be used in mythology

and folklore as much as in philology and in dreams.[2] Although I am skeptical of the principle of using a list of fixed keys in symbolic analysis, I am heedful of Freud's insights in folklore and mythology. Claude Lévi-Strauss once pointed out that Freud's greatness "lies partly in a gift he possesses in the highest degree: he can think the way myths do,"[3] and I believe that the following discussion confirms this insight.

Whereas Freud's view of symbols as the vestiges of an archaic language supposes that symbolic keys are fixed, Lévi-Strauss regards symbols as part of the analogical mode of thought he called pensée sauvage, "savage mind." (This expression does not refer to the mind of savages; rather, it designates the human mind in its spontaneous analogical mode, as opposed to its cultivated, analytical mode.) Lévi-Strauss acknowledges a number of striking symbolic convergences between European folklore and Amerindian myths, which he puts down to "universal analogies" that are recognizable "no matter what one's mother tongue may be."[4] But he reckons that metaphorical processes are context-dependent, which means one cannot rely on ready-made keys to grasp meanings. As Lévi-Strauss put it, "to understand the meaning of an element, we must always look at it in all its contexts. In oral literature, these contexts manifest themselves in numerous variants, that is, in a whole system of compatibilities and incompatibilities."[5] This is another way of saying that we must grapple with myriad transformations in variants as we search for similarities – a precept I take to heart.

Variants, stability, and symbolic equivalence

Some background information on oral tales may be helpful at this point. Oral traditions are an ephemeral mode of transmission. In the absence of a durable recording medium, stories must be retold over and over again if they are to persist. Taletellers will vary the details of stories as they pass them on, but changes will stick only insofar as the community accepts them. Therefore, although no two variants are ever similar, folktales tend to remain stable. This "remarkable stability of the essential story in the midst of continually shifting details," to use Stith Thompson's wording, has astounded folklorists.[6] To explain it, many folklorists have rallied around Walter Anderson's proposed "law of self-correction." Anderson

noted that taletellers usually hear a story several times, which takes care of the “gaps” and “errors” that arise from the memory weaknesses of listeners, as well as of the occasional “deviation” by the narrator. Moreover, they hear a tale from many tellers, which clears up the “errors” and “variations” characteristic of each source. Last but not least, when a narrator tells a story with “deviations” on different occasions, the audience will recall how on a previous occasion the story was told “correctly.”[7] This is a fine description of folktale transmission. However, Anderson’s very idea of self-correction assumes that tradition involves an incessant struggle to correctly reproduce Urtexts. Differently put, the assumption that variants revert to the correct story presupposes a benchmark for recognizing errors and plotting deviations. But, in fact, you do not find textual benchmarks in oral traditions. Ultimately, Anderson cannot explain how audiences mysteriously manage to keep correcting the “gaps” and “errors,” so as to revert to the “correct” tale, because – quite simply – there is no original text to revert to.

An alternative explanation of the stability of stories in spite of continually shifting details relies on the reckoning of meanings. Obviously, a tale can only come in many variants and yet remain stable if somehow the variants tell in different words the same story. To put it differently, the variants of a tale must comprise equivalent motifs. In fairy tales, Maria Tatar proposed, “the figurative or metaphorical dimension of language takes on literal meaning.”[8] In light of this insight, one might define tale variants as permutations on metaphors that are pertinent for a given theme. Let us say, then, that the metaphors at work in a tale delineate its semantic field. If so, then the examination of those metaphors affords the means to grasp whatever the tale variants express in myriad ways.

Alan Dundes proposed a method to make sense of variation in folktales. He pointed out that if a number of motifs can fill the same slot in a tale – if the story works with any of them – then a comparison of the “allomotifs” should clarify why they are permutable. By comparing tale variants, then, one may discover symbolic equivalences. Using this method one could, step by step, “unlock the secrets of symbolism in folklore.”[9] This is certainly an alluring proposal. Let us have a closer look.

According to Dundes, if A and B both fulfill the same narrative slot, then we can assume taletellers are equating A and B. However, Dundes specifies, “we can tell that A and B are functional or symbolic equivalents, but not necessarily that A is a symbol of B or that B is a symbol of A.” For example, if you find tale variants equating a phallus and a nose, “it is just as likely that a phallus is a symbolic nose as it is that a nose is a symbolic phallus.” But, Dundes proposes, if we find evidence “that either A or B is a tabooed subject, then we might well expect that the non-tabooed subject might be substituted for the tabooed subject rather than vice-versa” – in other words, the nose would symbolize the phallus, rather than vice versa.[10]

Dundes’s procedure, as well as his choice of an example, indicates his intellectual debt to Freud. Symbols, according to Freud, screen something repressed – the “‘genuine’ thing behind” them, as he put it.[11] In this view, spotting a symbol requires selecting the allomotif that conveys the “genuine thing,” typically to be found in Freud’s standard list of symbols (which you may find in “Symbolism in Dreams,” Freud’s tenth introductory lecture to psychoanalysis). For example, when Dundes addresses a set of allomotifs in tale type 570, “The Rabbit Herd,” he finds “that being thrown into a snake pit, being decapitated, and having one’s ‘pecker’ cut off are in some sense the same act.” In compliance with the Freudian assertion that “decapitation can be a symbolic substitute for castration,” Dundes selects castration as the genuine thing and beheading as its symbol. But this leaves the snake-pit allomotif unaccounted for. In a footnote, Dundes proposes that the “snake-pit allomotif…might represent a ‘poison damsel’ threat.”[12] This is a brilliant insight, and I shall return to it. But Dundes does not pursue his insight – he never actually asks what a “poison damsel” threat may have to do with beheading and castration. Instead of trying to figure out the semantic field represented by the available range of allomotifs, he falls back on just a pair of allomotifs that comply with Freud’s interpretive key.

Dundes’s handling of symbolic relations introduces a psychoanalytical bias into the elucidation of allomotifs, but this bias can easily be overridden. Lévi-Strauss remarked that a metaphor, in bringing together two semantic realms, works like a two-way street. Symbols being the links between terms on each end of a metaphor, symbolic processes are

bidirectional.[13] For example, the symbolic link between beheading and castration is not a one-way relation. It is part of the metaphoric relation between the body (with its head) and the phallus (with its glans). And the symbolic relation between the head and the glans works both ways – beheading connotes "castration" because, in turn, the phallus has a "head." Variations on this metaphor, explored by Dundes himself, include the idea of the phallus with an "eye" (and the corresponding epithet of "cockeye"), the image of the phallus as a "bald-headed guy," and the idiom "spitten image" (used to refer to a child who resembles his father), which entails in addition that the phallus has a "mouth."[14] Presumably, the image of the snake pit and the "'poison damsel' threat" enacts some parallel metaphor. The point is, a string of allomotifs may encompass a number of metaphors, and it is relevant to learn what those may have in common. Ideally, one would like to find the semantic values underlying all the available allomotifs.

Granted, this is all a bit abstract. I shall presently offer a case study in symbolic analysis to clarify my argument. For this purpose, I consider a string of allomotifs conveying a theme of feminine transformation at the core of a rather obscure tale, "The Maiden Who Seeks Her Brothers," and in some related stories.

ATU 451, "The Maiden Who Seeks Her Brothers"

The tale of the maiden who seeks her brothers is filed in the Aarne-Thompson-Uther international folktales index (henceforth, ATU) as tale type 451.[15] This tale of several brothers and their sister brings together two important clusters of themes. On the one hand, the birth of a sister causes the departure of a group of brothers into a spell of enchantment. This theme presumably draws on a venerable stock of folk ideas regarding spare children. Across Europe, a number of fairy tales and customary practices express the unchanging idea that any child born in excess of a number of same-sex siblings lacked an available place in the family and remained, therefore, in touch with the otherworld.[16] ATU 451 speculatively explores one implication of this notion. Granted that a saturated series of brothers leaves no available position for further siblings, this tale posits that the late-born girl might thrive if the boys die

– or, less dramatically, if they go into enchantment. For example, in the Grimm Brothers' tale collection (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, henceforth KHM), story no. 25, "The Seven Ravens," recounts that the frail girl born after seven brothers thrives after the father curses the boys into being ravens in the glass mountain. And in KHM 9, "The Twelve Brothers," the father decides to kill the boys so that the late-born daughter can thrive. But, as it happens, the girl cannot avoid her otherworldly tribulations and must endure a spell in the woods around the time of her puberty. Overall, this tale brings together the theme of a saturated series of boys chased into the forest (as in the story of Little Thumb and his brothers) and a theme of otherworldly enchantment at puberty (as in the stories of Sleeping Beauty and Snow White).[17]

The tale of the maiden who seeks her brothers contains three main sequences. First, the sister causes her older brothers to depart into an enchanted realm and then searches for them. Second, the sister stays living with her brothers in the forest, where she spills her blood and causes the brothers' metamorphosis into animals. And third, the sister gets married and undergoes an enchantment-like phase while striving to disenchant her brothers. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (who were themselves the eldest of five brothers and a younger sister) present no fewer than three variants of the tale, each emphasizing one particular sequence. KHM 25, "The Seven Ravens," focuses on the young woman's search for her brothers; KHM 9, "The Twelve Brothers," addresses the period the sister spends with her brothers in the woods; and KHM 49, "The Six Swans" (of which Hans Christian Andersen's variant, "The Wild Swans," is a verbose close relation), emphasizes the sister's post-marriage enchantment. In accordance with the Grimms' use of three variants to present the tale, the ATU folktales catalogue lists three subtypes under tale type 451. My discussion focuses on subtype 2:

> A girl finds her brothers in a remote place and keeps house for them. They tell her to take care of the cat (dog), watch the fire, and be careful of the demonic neighbor (ogre, witch). Once she forgets to divide her food with the cat, so it puts out the fire. After the girl asks the neighbor for help, the ogre comes regularly to suck her blood. When the brothers discover this, they kill him. The girl takes flowers

(herbs) from the grave of the ogre. Her brothers eat them and they are changed into oxen (sheep, birds). The episode of disenchantment is less important.[18]

I propose to elucidate this string of motifs in reference to a cluster of allomotifs running across variants of this tale as well as across other related tales. My point, again, is that to advance Propp's inquiry on the similarity of all fairy tales requires unveiling symbolic equivalences across different narratives.

Blood in the forest

Let us start on familiar ground by examining the well-known Grimm variant. Here is an abstract of KHM 9, "The Twelve Brothers" (first published in 1812):

A king with twelve children, all boys, decrees that if the thirteenth child the queen is about to bear is a girl, the twelve boys must die so that her possessions can be great and the kingdom may fall to her alone. When the mother does deliver a girl, she puts up a "flag red as blood" which announces to the boys that they are to die. As the twelve boys see the flag, they swear that if they "run into a girl, her red blood will flow." Then they go deeper into the dark forest, take residence in an enchanted hut, and become hunters. After the sister finds them, she stays and keeps house for them. She collects wood and gathers herbs in the forest, and she cooks for the brothers. But, one fateful day, the girl plucks twelve lilies that grow in the garden of the enchanted house, and then her brothers turn into ravens and fly away over the forest. To disenchant them, the sister must endure seven years without either speaking or laughing. She spends part of that time sitting in a tree, spinning; then she marries, but her mother-in-law slanders her and she cannot defend herself. The young woman is condemned to death, and she is about to be burned at the stake when the seven years are over, and the brothers, whom she disenchanted, save her.[19]

At first sight it may seem like the Grimm text has little in common with oral variants. But consider this variant as a coherent whole, and you will notice an insistent blood leitmotif that matches the core event of the oral tales. A blood-red flag sends the brothers into the forest, and they promise they will shed the "red blood" of any girl they meet; then they become hunters, which means they shed the blood of prey. So, the dark forest is a place where blood flows. There the brothers shed the blood of their victims, and there the sister joins them as a virtual victim. While it is true that the brothers forgive her, this tight set of blood hints suggests she is bound to bleed in the forest. But we cannot take this for granted; rather, we must examine other variants. Consider Giambattista Basile's older variant (1636), "The Seven Little Doves":

> Seven brothers leave home when the mother delivers a baby girl, and they settle in a dark wood. Basile maintains that the brothers wanted a sister and left home because they thought their mother had delivered a boy. But he depicts the boys taking service with an ogre who is blind because his eyes were once torn out by a woman while he was sleeping; hence, this ogre "was such an enemy of the female sex that he ate up every one of them that he could get." When the sister joins the boys, they warn her to stay inside their room to hide from the ogre. She is to share all her food with a she-cat that lives in the room, or else…or else, as it happens one day, the girl fails to share a hazelnut and the cat pees and extinguishes the cooking fire. The girl has to go steal a firebrand from the ogre, who sharpens his fangs in anticipation. But the brothers, back from hunting, push the ogre into a deep ditch. On his grave grows a rosemary bush. After the sister picks a rosemary sprig, her seven brothers turn into doves and fly away. The sister goes to their rescue.[20]

Basile's variant confirms that the sister risks shedding her blood as she joins her brothers in the forest. More unexpectedly, it draws our attention to the link between this blood theme and the fact that the sister causes the metamorphosis of her brothers. Recall that in the Grimm text the girl plucks twelve lilies, which, as an old woman informs her, "were your brothers, and now they've been turned into ravens forever."[21] And in

Basile's text, of course, it is as the sister picks rosemary growing on the ogre's tomb that the brothers turn into doves.

The parallel between flowers representing the brothers, or growing in the ogre's grave, suggests that the brothers and the ogre are – somehow, at some level – the same. Clearly, Basile's misogynist ogre corresponds to the brothers who vow to attack girls in Grimm. But each variant unveils a different aspect of the forest episode. Whereas the Grimm text mentions the spilling of the sister's red blood at the hands of the hunter brothers, it denies that the attack actually takes place. Basile, on a different tack, acknowledges an attempted attack but imputes it to the ogre. Anyway, both literary variants introduce the theme of the sister bleeding in the woods. Granted, in the end they both shy away. But oral variants are often less squeamish. Take a Basque story called "The Wild Man":

> Three sons leave their impoverished mother and repair to the woods. They ask for shelter in the faraway castle of the wild man. The wild woman agrees to hide them from her husband, but the wild man sniffs and finds the boys. He agrees to spare them if the boys become his servants, and on the morrow they go hunting together. Eventually, the little sister decides to look for her brothers; she also becomes the wild man's servant. But she starts getting thinner and thinner, and eventually the brothers make her confess that every evening the master sucks her finger "through the door." The brothers put an end to this situation by throwing the wild man down a ravine. Then, one day, the wild woman brings home three large teeth and instructs the girl to put the teeth in the water she uses to wash her brothers' feet. The brothers become oxen, and the girl now drives them into the fields, and she lives there on the birds the oxen find for her. Then she forces the wild woman to tell her how to change the oxen back into men (hazel rods do the trick). The brothers and the sister stay living together in the wild man's castle.[22]

By now, we have a sense of how different renderings of a story offer but partial hints, which gradually become meaningful as they are compared to one another. Interestingly, the tale collector states that this is the only depiction he knows of the Basque wild man (Basa-Jaun) "as a vampire."[23]

We are still not in a position to understand why our tale draws the Basa-Jaun into a vampire-like role, but hopefully the comparison of allomotifs will shed light on the matter. Keeping this in mind, let us examine the crucial scene in the forest.

Fire and blood

In the forest episode there are three main events to consider. First, the sister allows the cooking fire to die (often she fails to partake of food with a pet, and the animal urinates on the fire) and has to go get new fire from the forest demon. Second, when the demon is a male he often sucks blood from the girl's finger, and then the brothers kill him (often, they decapitate him). And, finally, the sister brings the demon's remains to her brothers and causes their metamorphosis.

Regarding the cooking-fire episode, Basile's text and a number of oral variants pointedly specify that the item the girl fails to share with the animal is a hazelnut. The recurrence of the hazelnut is significant because it has strong otherworldly resonances, of which a quick overview may be given. In KHM 21, "Cinderella," the girl plants a hazel branch on her mother's grave, and from the hazel tree she receives the dead mother's offerings; likewise, in a French variant, a hazelnut contains all that the girl needs to go to the ball.[24] The tenth religious legend in KHM, "The Hazel-Branch," states that a hazel branch protects women from adders and serpents. In "The Wild Man," above, the sister disenchants her brothers with hazel sticks, which also work in French folklore (along with exhortations to the moon) for disenchanting someone under a spell.[25] An ethnographical anecdote from Asturias states that a cow standing by a hazel tree senses someone's death.[26] And, in a Russian tale, the hero fights otherworldly dragons on a white hazel-wood bridge.[27] All these otherwise heterogeneous data bits have in common the constant association of hazel trees with the dead, enchantment, adders, and dragons. In our tale, of course, the young woman who eats a hazelnut plays into the hands of the forest demon.

It is relevant that her passage into the realm of enchantment hinges on a quest for fire. Her cooking fire has been dowsed, and she must get new fire

from the forest demon. Here is a partial abstract from a Britton variant, “The Serpent’s Fire”:

> On the third evening the girl lets the fire die out while picking appetizing pears. “Here I have to run to the old woman’s house…My God, protect me from the snake’s bite,” she mutters along the way. The serpent’s mother, a fairy, gives her a firebrand, but the serpent (who was asleep by the hearth) proclaims that since she has stolen his fire now she must choose between being decapitated and letting him suck her finger three times a day. Day after day he exsanguinates the girl, and the brothers eventually cut the serpent’s seven heads as they pass under the door.[28]

Notice that there is barter involved in this quest, for the girl receives fire and must repay with blood. This tit-for-tat dynamic suggests the equivalence of the traded substances. Indeed, the girl in her quest for the serpent’s fire receives the serpent’s bite, which translates in her bleeding. (The symbolical equivalence of blood and fire yields a number of stories about the origin of fire in a woman’s genitals, which you can peruse in James George Frazer’s *Myths of the Origin of Fire*.[29]) In our tale the fire and the blood never overlap – rather, they give way to one another. While the sister minds the cooking fire, no mention is made of her blood. Then, after receiving the new fire, she starts bleeding – and the cooking fire lapses into the background, for the blood is what matters now. So, I submit that the girl’s new fire is the blood she sheds anew. It is no accident that the serpent’s mother bestows the fire, and then the male serpent exacts the blood price. A French variant from Limousin, “The Werewolf,” likewise depicts the werewolf’s wife granting the fire, and then the werewolf sucking the girl’s blood.[30] Some Iberian variants are even more explicit, for they depict the forest demon as a feminine duo – an old crone and her daughter – and the girl gets the old woman’s fire by taking the daughter’s place. For instance, in an Asturian variant, “The Girl and the Raven,” the witch intends to kill the girl who came asking for fire, but then her daughter switches places with the visitor in the shared bed, which leads the witch to unwittingly kill her own daughter – and the girl flees with the embers.[31] Another Asturian variant, “The Witch,” reveals that after the

witch butchers her own daughter she cleans up all the blood and then gives the girl her fire.[32] Here the equivalence between the daughter's blood and the fire granted is most explicit.

Other blood allomotifs

The equivalence between blood and fire comes out in yet another way. In "The Girl and the Raven," after the girl flees with the embers, the vengeful witch sows hemlock in the boys' garden. The sister takes the hemlock for parsley and feeds it to her brothers, who turn into oxen. According to a Portuguese variant, "Emily and Felicity," the witch turns herself into luscious parsley, which the sister feeds to her brothers; they turn into oxen.[33] And consider that in a French variant from the Vendée region, "The Red Ball," a beautiful patch of parsley grows on the male demon's grave; the sister uses it to season her brothers' food, and they turn into sheep.[34] This is interesting because, of course, the demon sucked the sister's blood just before dying. So an ogre gorged with feminine blood lies in the grave, and the parsley patch is an outcrop of that. As both Bernadette Bricout and Marina Warner noted, parsley was reputed for stimulating feminine hemorrhages.[35] It follows that a blood token unites the old woman who transmits the fire and the girl who receives it – parsley represents the metamorphosed old woman, and it stems from the young woman's blood.

Another conspicuous outcrop on the ogre's grave may be noted. In a French story from Burgundy, "The Seven Brothers,"[36] the elder brother buries the werewolf's head in the garden, and a thicket of beautiful and fragrant flowers grows there. The sister uses some of those "poisoned" flowers to perfume the boys' linen, and the brothers turn into birds and fly away. A variant from Nivernais, "The Captain's Wife," depicts the sister herself burying the ogre's head in the garden and then using the flowers growing on the grave – which, we are told, are "more beautiful and fragrant than roses" – to perfume the linen.[37] The semantic articulation between flowers that are poisoned and are like superlative roses is significant, for in European folklore roses and poison consistently come together in regard to feminine blood. As the term "defloration" implies, virgins are deemed in possession of flowers. This widespread metaphor is

clear in the French expression *jeunes filles en fleurs* (“maidens in bloom”) as much as in Shakespeare’s description of a virgin as “a fresh uncropped flower” destined to lose her “roses” and barely keep her “thorns” to prick herself (*All’s Well That Ends Well* 4.2.18–19, 5.3.126, 5.3.319).

Notice that Shakespeare’s dissociation of roses into blooms and thorns precisely matches the contents of another well-known Grimm tale – KHM 50, “Briar Rose” – in which the namesake protagonist bleeds at age fifteen and is then surrounded by a hedge that turns from briars into blooms. This briars-and-blooms dichotomy actually corresponds to the two dimensions of feminine blood, baneful and fruitful, in an ancient folk model of procreation repeatedly found in historical and ethnographical sources. On the one hand, womb blood is supposedly the feminine substance of procreation; on the other, the monthly flux purifies this fertile medium, and therefore it is deemed toxic. A sixteenth-century French medical doctor, Laurent Joubert, conveys these assumptions as he asserts that women are “venomous and could poison men through copulation when they had their flowers.”[38] This analogical background helps explain why flowers growing from a blood-gorged ogre evoke both roses and poison.

In Basile’s variant the ogre does not suck the girl’s blood; so it is fitting that Basile adorns the grave with rosemary, which has a well-attested funereal value throughout Europe. Even so, the feminine hint persists. A Sicilian variant of ATU 407 (“The Girl as Flower”) depicts the young woman as a rosemary bush.[39]

A lunar scenery

In short, granted the equivalence between fire and blood, the transfer of fire between the old woman and the girl reads as a transfer of blood, which subsequently the male demon spills. You may find it surprising that this description fits the drift of oral variants of another tale that looks altogether different. But when Little Red Riding Hood gathers hazelnuts on her way to granny’s (in Perrault’s variant), and locates granny’s house behind a hedge of hazel bushes (in KHM 26), she raises a red flag for us. This clear warning of an otherworldly locus fits the fact that oral variants depict Little Red Riding Hood meeting a werewolf at granny’s house. Moreover, she drinks the blood and eats the blood-irrigated organs (along

with the breasts) of granny. In a memorable essay, ethnologist Yvonne Verdier showed that the oral tradition of Little Red Riding Hood displays a transmission of fertile blood between the old menopausal woman and the pubescent maiden, “as though drawn from one vessel to another,” which Verdier describes as a “vampiric image.” Moreover, she notices that the werewolf is present “at every transformation of the girl…he leads the game and conducts the girl toward every step in her feminine destiny, which is realized through him.”[40] It is clear, therefore, that in both ATU 333 (“Little Red Riding Hood”) and ATU 451 the young woman who repairs to the woods receives her fertility from an elder woman before a werewolf, or a serpent, makes her bleed.

The very equivalence between a werewolf and a serpent at the forest hut is significant. As Roman Jakobson and Marc Szeftel noted regarding a Slavic tradition about a werewolf who was the scion of a serpent, “the serpent able to shed its skin brings into the world a son provided at his birth with a second skin, and afterwards enriched with a werewolf power to change his skin” – a “demonic” creature associated with the moon.[41] The insight that serpents and werewolves have in common being skin shifters holds true in Western Europe (werewolves were called *versipellis*, “skin shifters,” in Latin). Now, skin shifting allows changing shape (as werewolves reputably do) as well as rejuvenating (as serpents supposedly do). These are lunar attributes – every month the moon changes its shape, “dies” to be “reborn,” and reappears as its younger self; moreover, the moon’s cycles exactly match feminine cycles. This is a case of seemingly universal (or very widespread) symbolism. In many cultures, as Robert Briffault remarked, snakes have in common with the moon “the gift of immortality through perpetual renewal”; therefore, he adds, serpents supposedly “play the same part in regard to the functions of women as the moon.”[42]

In our tale, the lunar connection illuminates the brothers’ metamorphosis into horned animals (oxen, rams, deer). European folklore often depicts the crescent moon as “horned,” and a long iconographic tradition portrays the crescent moon on the head of a horned animal.[43] Of course, the brothers also turn into birds (ravens and doves). Considerately, Basile connects the dots for us. On the one hand, he depicts the sister’s strife to disenchant her brothers as a trip to the house of the mother of

Time, there to find “a quartered coat of arms over the door, where you can see a serpent biting its tail, a stag, a crow, and a phoenix.” On the other, he portrays the brothers reverting from their dove shapes the moment they “perched on the horns of a dead ox.”[44] Thus, in a masterstroke, Basile associates the shapes taken by the brothers in different variants (as they turn into ravens or crows, doves, or horned animals) to cyclical time. Overall, it appears that the forest hut is a lunar domain of flowing blood and cyclical transformations. Its resident lunar demon may dissociate into two forms – old and young, female and male – and is involved in the transmission of cyclical fertility as well as in shape-shifting imagery.

Finger bleeding, decapitation, and spines

The motif of a drenched fire leading the sister towards the forest demon hints at a correlation between fire aversion, menarche, and finger bleeding, which other tales help confirm. In KHM 24, “Frau Holle,” and its variants, although finger bleeding is the cause (rather than the consequence) of fire avoidance, the correlation holds true. This story features a girl spinning by a well until her fingers bleed. Once, her spindle gets covered with blood, slips out of her hands, and falls to the bottom of the well. The girl follows it and finds herself in a meadow with many thousands of flowers. There she causes apples to fall “like rain”[45] – a metaphorical red flux – and rescues loaves from an overheated oven. A variant from Hesse specifies that she “quickly takes the soup off the fire, pours water on the roast meat, draws the cakes out of the oven.” In short, the girl who bleeds from a finger enters a wet realm – a blood realm, described in terms of myriad flowers and a red flux of apples – and she counters the blaze of a cooking fire. In other variants, the girl in the well milks a red cow and meets “a little red woman.”[46] A variant to Grimms’ “Cinderella” clarifies these red hints, as it states that after the young woman marries her prince, while “lying ill after the birth of a son,” she is thrown into a well of blood.[47] This blunt image clarifies that getting into a well after bleeding stands for entering a blood phase – a wet phase. In our tale, in a later episode, the sister is also pushed into a well after bearing babies. You may recall that ATU 451 usually conveys the notion of a menarcheal wet phase by means of the doused-fire image, which calls for the renewal of fire. The

realization that the menarcheal girl enters a wet phase helps us understand why a domestic animal pees on the fire before the girl starts bleeding.

In KHM 50, “Briar Rose,” finger pricking likewise depicts the onset of menarche as a period of enchantment. The girl pricks her finger at age fifteen and then slumbers surrounded by briars. Eventually, the thorns of this metaphorical rose withdraw and a suitor penetrates the hedge of flowers. (Relevantly, in Perrault’s variant, the cooking fire is prominent in the list of things that go dormant along with the princess, and cooked meat is available after she revives.) This clever euphemism for defloration is in line with an old tradition depicting the rape of the slumbering girl.[48] Basile, in his “Sun, Moon, and Talia” (published in 1636), says the prince “carried her in his arms to a bed and picked the fruits of love. Then he left her in the bed and returned to his kingdom” – after which, the sleeping beauty bears and suckles twins in her sleep.[49] More coyly, a Portuguese oral variant, “The Skirt with Bells,” states that the maiden was assiduously courted during her slumber and, eventually, delivered three children before waking up.[50] Overall, the enchanted sleep of the finger-pricked girl in a tower includes menarche, defloration, and parturition – the three bloodsheds in a woman’s procreative life.

Interestingly, the Grimm variant states that the briars hedge had caused a number of suitors to die an agonizing death. This detail may seem trivial, but it brings to mind an incident (in KHM 12) involving another menarcheal girl shut in a tower. Although Rapunzel never bleeds from a finger, her name means rampion – a herb recommended for regulating the menstrual cycle, as Marina Warner sagaciously noted[51] – and she is named after parsley in oral variants as well as in “Persinette” by Mademoiselle de La Force (1785), a text in the genealogy of the Grimm variant.[52] In any case, the emmenagogic (menses-provoking) herb is the property of an old witch, who sequesters the young woman impersonating the herb. But a suitor manages to deflower the girl. And then, remarkably, the old crone – with a “poisonous look” in her eye – causes the seducer to fall in the briars around the tower, and he becomes blind.[53] This clue leads us back to the fact that in Basile’s variant of ATU 451 the misogynistic ogre has been blinded by a woman; this detail, in turn, draws our attention to the decapitation of the blood-sucking male demon in oral variants. This comparative thread confirms what may have seemed obvious from the

start – the spilling of a girl's blood by a male demon qualifies as a defloration. (In "The Serpent's Fire," quoted above, the options the serpent lays before the girl – to submit her finger or else be decapitated – is arguably the alternative between losing her blood or losing her "maiden head"; not really an alternative, but rather a clue on the nature of the impending bloodshed.) But my point is, it pays to be cautious and leave the last word to allomotifs.

So we find here a theme of pre-marital defloration. Since the suitors who first approach menarcheal girls get blinded or beheaded, Freud's propositions that beheading and blinding are symbolic substitutes for castration are now firmly on the table. With the benefit of hindsight, we can appreciate the value of Dundes's insight on the symbolic equivalence between consorting with poisonous maidens, being decapitated, and being castrated, for the foregoing discussion introduced us to the notion that women on the side of briars are "poisonous" and harmful to men.

As you may recall, Dundes did not follow up on his own insight because he was sorting allomotifs in pairs, so as to unveil Freudian equivalences. Instead, we have been appraising strings of allomotifs in order to figure out the semantic field underpinning traditional stories. Sometimes those values have been effectively grasped by Freud, and sometimes we need to figure them out anew. Either way, as the work progresses, Freud's contribution to the understanding of symbols becomes clearer.

At this point, an obvious objection may arise. When the demon comes by to suck the girl's finger and she asks him to stick his head through a hole in the door so that her brothers can cut his neck, it is not the woman's blood (her "briars") that wounds the suitor; rather, it is her brothers. But, precisely, the brothers are of the young woman's blood. I submit that the parallel between the piercing briars in other tales and the brothers' hatchet in this episode is understandable in light of the notion of own blood, in the expanded sense of pubertal and kin blood. Arguably, the sister who seeks her brothers enters a phase of own blood in this encompassing sense. After she enters the woods, the demon (in implicit collusion with the brothers) bleeds the sister, then her brothers (her own blood) decapitate the demon, and, in turn, the ogre's remains (the sister's blood in them) transform the brothers into lunar animals. In a (hazel)nutshell, we could say that the shape-shifting demon conjoins the sister and her brothers in a series of

transformations of blood upon itself. Which, at long last, explains the vampiric imagery in our tale. Anthropologist Juliet du Boulay, in a fascinating study of Greek vampires, related these creatures with the notion of "blood going to blood that 'resembles itself.'"[54] (Note also that Eastern European representations often bring vampires and werewolves together.[55]) Du Boulay's insight clarifies why vampiric imagery fits the forest-hut scene where own blood turns on itself. And, given this image, it is reasonable to guess that at the core of the tale about the sister and her brothers is a representation of incest. Still, why does this whiff of incest hinge on the specific imagery of a lunar demon assimilated, in turns, to the menarcheal sister and her hunter brothers?

Lunar lovers

Given the question "Why are both the sister and her brothers associated with a lunar demon in a pattern of a pre-marital defloration?" the connection between lunar phases, feminine cycles, and the cultural attributes of feminine blood must be drawn into one orbit. You may be aware that the pattern of pre-nuptial defloration we glimpsed in fairy tales has a widespread recurrence in the ethnographic record. Freud knew about it and proposed some characteristically discerning thoughts on the theme. In an essay called "The Taboo of Virginity" (1918), he submitted that the psychological motivation for customs that dissociate the bridegroom from his bride's defloration is the desire to protect him from a psychical danger – namely, the hostile reaction of the sexually immature woman to the first sexual act. Whatever the value of this psychological speculation, Freud is at his best when he acknowledges that the blood of defloration is a foremost concern in people's minds. Penetratingly, he quotes Ludwig Anzengruber's comedy *Das Jungferngift* (*Virgin's Venom*, 1878) about a peasant lad who shuns the life-threatening danger of marrying his intended bride, and waits until she is a (no longer "venomous") widow. Freud also mentions Friedrich Hebbel's *Judith and Holofernes* (1841), in which Judith – a true poison-damsel, whose beauty "is like belladonna" – "castrates [in fact, beheads] the man who has deflowered her." And he notes that in the ethnographic record,

> Menstruation, especially its first appearance, is interpreted as the bite of some spirit-animal, perhaps as a sign of sexual intercourse with this spirit. Occasionally, some report gives grounds for recognizing the spirit as that of an ancestor and then…we understand that the menstruating girl is taboo because she is the property of this ancestral spirit.[56]

Quite independently (and based on an impressive array of sources), Briffault, in his little-known magnum opus, *The Mothers* (1927), notes that various cultures deem sexual relations a necessary accompaniment to menarche. More intriguingly, he notes that menarcheal girls are often deflowered by the very men they cannot marry – most notably, by fathers and brothers – because, being "of the same blood," they can "incur no peril from that blood."[57] It could be argued that these remarks spring from an out-of-fashion collage of decontextualized facts, which reflects the comparatist's bias as much as his sources. But this criticism can hardly stand against a contemporary anthropologist who studied mythic fantasy and ritual practices regarding women, in a single society, for over a decade. Gillian Gillison, hailing from the New Guinea highlands, makes the following point: "Like many Highlanders, Gimi speak of a menstruating woman as being 'killed' or 'shot' or 'looked upon' with fierce, killing looks by the Moon. Gimi say the Moon is every woman's 'first husband,' the one who deflowers her and induces menarche."[58]

Mythically speaking, Gillison adds, "it is a defloration that causes menstrual blood to flow for the first time"; therefore, a menstruating woman will tell her husband to stay away, for she is sleeping with her first husband.[59] And a woman's brother has inherent rights over her children, for he is her (mythical) primordial husband. Although the work of culture displaces these rights onto the "second" (and proper) husband, every month Moon temporarily takes back the woman, and – as Gillison puts it – "not until menopause, when her monthly assignations with the Moon end, is a Gimi woman fully released by her natal kinsmen and hence safe for other men to approach."[60] So, in this distant culture, Moon and a woman's brother coalesce in the role of "first husband" regarding a fantasied act of blood spilling. This is a prime example of the notion of own blood

encompassing pubertal and kin blood. Moreover, a Gimi woman notionally becomes a snake, like Moon, as she menstruates – for, as the python sheds its skin, so she sheds her blood[61] – which is another instance of Briffault's remark that serpents play the same part in regard to the functions of women as the moon.

Final thoughts

By way of concluding thoughts, let me make two points. On the side of method, this chapter upholds (with a caveat) Dundes's call for a study of allomotifs as a necessary procedure to unveil the tropes underpinning traditional stories. This procedure is a form of problem solving – you come up with conjectures and test them, discard unproductive guesses, take stock of new problems, and so on. The method is replicable by other scholars working on the same principles, and so results can be fine-tuned.

On the conceptual side, this chapter hints that fairy tales deal with the sort of images anthropologists call "mythical." (Unfortunately, folklorists often take "fairy tale" and "myth" as separate genres. Such broad genre partitions, if not used with extreme caution, may hinder meaning-seeking approaches, which are essentially comparative.) This discussion gradually brings to light a lunar realm of initiation and metamorphosis right at the core of fairy tales, which is reminiscent of "ritual" imagery. This result opens for me a score of questions, which more or less coalesce in the big interrogation of why the symbolic language of fairy tales is comparable to that of a faraway "primitive" culture. My personal hunch, in accordance with Lévi-Strauss's point regarding universal analogies that are recognizable no matter what one's mother tongue may be, is that fairy tales rely on widely perceived metaphors concerning basic physiological and cosmic processes. If so, the symbolic survey of fairy tales belongs with that of myths and rituals – old and modern – in the study of human symbolic imagination. But surely you have some pressing queries of your own, and that is precisely the point. Coming to terms with the symbolic language of fairy tales tends to trigger unexpected insights, which may open new lines of inquiry. And yet, symbolic analysis remains a relatively modest endeavor – it clears the underbrush so that interpretive scaffolds

can then be set up in the forest of symbols, hopefully leading to new questions, and on to ever better inquiries.

Notes

1 Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 16, 87.

2 Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, trans. James Strachey (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1989), 185, 204–5, 207. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, ed. Angela Richards, trans. James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991), 469.

3 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Jealous Potter*, trans. Bénédicte Chorier (University of Chicago Press, 1988), 190.

4 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le Cru et le cuit* (Paris: Plon, 1964), 344.

5 Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Structure and Form," in *Theory and History of Folklore*, ed. Anatoly Liberman, trans. Monique Layton (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 182.

6 Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 437.

7 Walter Anderson, *Kaiser und Abt: Die Geschichte eines Schwanks* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1923), 399–406.

8 Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* (Princeton University Press, 1987), 80.

9 Alan Dundes, “The Symbolic Equivalence of Allomotifs: Towards a Method of Analyzing Folktales,” in *The Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2007), 319.

10 Alan Dundes, *Parsing through Customs: Essays by a Freudian Folklorist* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 168, 170.

11 Freud, *Introductory*, 185.

12 Dundes, *Parsing*, 174, 176n11.

13 Lévi-Strauss, *Jealous Potter*, 194, 205.

14 Alan Dundes, “Wet and Dry, the Evil Eye: An Essay in Indo-European and Semitic Worldview,” in *The Evil Eye: A Folklore Casebook*, ed. Alan Dundes (New York and London: Garland, 1981), 276–81.

15 Hans-Jörg Uther, ed., *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography*, Folklore Fellows Communications, 3 vols. (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004), vol. I, 267–8.

16 I have examined this complex of ideas in “Iberian Seventh-Born Children, Werewolves, and the Dragon Slayer: A Case Study in the Comparative Interpretation of Symbolic Praxis and Fairytales.” *Folklore*, 114.3 (2003): 335–53.

17 Monika Kropej (“Snow White in West and South Slavic Tradition,” *Fabula*, 49 [2008]: 218–43) shows that the forest exile of the sister of many brothers often mingles with that of Snow White in Slavic traditions. Graham Anderson, *Fairytale in the Ancient World* (London: Routledge, 2000), 46–60, recognizes a similar overlap in the story of Chione, daughter of Boreas.

18 Uther, *Types of International Folktale*, vol. I, 267.

19 Maria Tatar, ed. and trans., *The Annotated Brothers Grimm* (New York: Norton, 2012), 36–43.

20 Giambattista Basile, *The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones*, trans. Nancy L. Canepa (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), 350–3.

21 Tatar, *Annotated Brothers Grimm*, 41.

22 Wentworth Webster, *Basque Legends* (London: Griffith and Farran, 1879), 49–53.

23 *Ibid*., 52n.

24 Paul Delarue and Marie-Louise Tenèze, *Le Conte populaire français: Catalogue raisonné des versions de France et des pays de langue française d'outre-mer* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1977), vol. II, 246.

25 Paul Sébillot, *Le folk-lore de France* (Paris: Guilmoto, 1904), vol. I, 60.

26 María Cátedra, *This World, Other Worlds: Sickness, Suicide, Death, and the Afterlife Among the Vaqueiros de Alzada of Spain*, trans. William A. Christian, Jr. (University of Chicago Press, 1992), 269–70.

27 Alexander Afanasev, *Russian Fairy Tales*, trans. Norbert Guterman. Folkloristic commentary by Roman Jakobson (New York: Pantheon, 1975), 238–42.

28 François Cadic, *Contes et légendes de Bretagne: Les Contes populaires* (Rennes: Terre de brume/Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1998), vol. II, 59–60.

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30 Geneviève Massignon, *De bouche à oreille: Anthologie de contes populaires français* (Paris: Corti, 2006), 225.

31 Aurélio de Llano de Ampudia, *Cuentos asturianos recogidos de la tradición oral* (Madrid: R. Caro Raggio, 1925), 284–5.

32 Constantino Cabal, *Los cuentos tradicionales asturianos* (Madrid: Voluntad, 1924), 64.

33 Francisco Xavier d'Athaide Oliveira, *Contos tradicionaes de Algarve* (Porto: Typographia Universal, 1905), vol. II, 137–41.

34 Geneviève Massignon, *Contes de l'Ouest (Brière, Vendée, Angoumois)* (Paris: Érasme, 1954), 175–82.

35 Marina Warner, "Rapunzel, Parsley & Pregnancy." *The New York Review of Books* (July 17, 2008). www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2008/jul/17/rapunzel-parsley-pregnancy. Retrieved July 8, 2014. Cf. Bernadette Bricout, *La Clé des contes* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 47.

36 Claude Seignolle, *Contes populaires et légendes de Bourgogne* (Paris: Les Presses de la Renaissance, 1977), 23–35.

37 Delarue and Tenèze, *Conte populaire*, vol. II, 129–32.

38 Laurent Joubert, *Popular Errors*, trans. Gregory David de Rocher (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 128.

39 Italo Calvino, *Italian Folktales*, trans. George Martin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 583–5.

40 Yvonne Verdier, “Little Red Riding Hood in Oral Tradition,” trans. Joseph Gaughan, *Marvels & Tales*, 11 (1997): 110, 112.

41 Roman Jakobson and Marc Szeftel, “The Vseslav Epos,” in *Russian Epic Studies*, ed. Roman Jakobson and E. J. Simmons (Philadelphia, PA: American Folklore Society, 1949), 64–5.

42 Robert Briffault, *The Mothers*, ed. Gordon Rattray Taylor, abridged edition (New York: Atheneum, 1977), 312, 315.

43 Francisco Vaz da Silva, *Archeology of Intangible Heritage* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 19–22, 63–70, 117.

44 Basile, *Tale of Tales*, 256, 257.

45 Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Grimm’s Household Tales*, trans. Margaret Hunt (London: Bell, 1884), vol. I, 105. Cf. Tatar, ed. and trans., *Annotated Brothers Grimm*, 136.

46 Grimm and Grimm, *Household Tales*, vol. I, 369, 371.

47 *Ibid*., vol. I, 364.

48 Gilles Roussineau, “Tradition littéraire et culture populaire dans l’histoire de Troïlus et de Zellandine (Perceforest, troisième partie), version ancienne du conte de la Belle au Bois Dormant.” *Arthuriana*, 4.1 (1994): 30–45.

49 Basile, *Tale of Tales*, 414.

50 Joaquim Teófilo Braga, *Contos tradicionaes do povo portuguez* (Porto: Livraria Universal, 1883), vol. I, 10.

51 Warner, “Rapunzel.”

52 Bricout, *Clé*, 39–51, has a good discussion on the oral tradition.

53 Tatar, *Annotated Brothers Grimm*, 62.

54 Juliet du Boulay, “The Greek Vampire,” in *The Vampire: A Casebook*, ed. Alan Dundes (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 106.

55 Felix Oinas, “East European Vampires,” in *The Vampire: A Casebook*, ed. Alan Dundes (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 51–2.

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58 Gillian Gillison, “Incest and the Atom of Kinship: The Role of the Mother’s Brother in a New Guinea Highlands Society.” *Ethos*, 15 (1987): 178.

59 *Ibid.*, 179.

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6 Trickster heroes in “The Boy Steals the Ogre’s Treasure”

Nancy Canepa

Fairy-tale heroes and ATU 328

Fairy-tale heroes stand center stage in their stories, moving the plot and providing models with which readers, listeners, and tellers identify. Who are these heroes? They may be irresistibly handsome Prince Charmings or fearless knights in shining armor who vanquish dragons and win beautiful princesses. But it is just as likely that they are scrappy, cunning underdogs, young women whose adventures take place within the confines of the home, or simpletons who happen upon their good fortune through no apparent merit of their own. Or even all of these. Maria Tatar notes the tendency to divide fairy-tale heroes into “active heroes and passive heroes, ‘formal heroes’ and ‘ideal heroes,’ tricksters and simpletons, dragon slayers and male Cinderellas,” but also reminds us that the attributes of heroes may morph in the course of their narratives: “character traits display an astonishing lack of stability, shifting almost imperceptibly into their opposites as the tale unfolds.”[1]

Mostly absent from the fairy tale, though, are the unequivocally exemplary characters that we commonly associate with the word “hero” – those who possess superhuman strength, courage, or nobility of soul, and who offer an irreproachable moral compass for the wider community. Why is this? Italo Calvino famously asserted that *le fiabe sono vere* – fairy tales are real – because they are an all-encompassing catalog of the “potential destinies of men and women,” documenting “the arbitrary division of humans, albeit in essence equal, into kings and poor people; the persecution of the innocent and their subsequent vindication;…love unrecognized when first encountered and then no sooner experienced than lost; the common fate of…having one’s existence predetermined by complex and unknown forces.”[2] Even in their marvelous settings fairy tales treat human beings in their here and now, offering directives for managing the most basic dilemmas of family and social life. The

characters who have the lead in these existential dramas are, it follows, those most embroiled in the complications of everyday life – young men and women at the bottom rungs of familial or societal hierarchies (the youngest sibling or stepchild, the destitute) – who have little to lose by leaving home or the status quo to explore unknown regions, and everything to gain by pushing conventional borders.

My focus will be on one group of these "unheroic" fairy-tale heroes – tricksters – as they appear in Italian variants of the tale type ATU 328, "The Boy Steals the Ogre's Treasure." Although today the variant of "Jack and the Beanstalk" has above all permeated popular culture (one of the latest incarnations is the 2013 film *Jack the Giant Slayer*), ATU 328 in its earliest and most widespread versions involves a quick-witted hero who travels horizontally, not vertically, on his mission to steal a giant or an ogre's marvelous possessions. In Europe giant-killing tales first became popular in eighteenth-century England (even if they appeared earlier, as we shall see), but they are present throughout the world; for example, one of the best-known non-European tricksters is the Native American Coyote (sometimes Raven), who, similarly to other heroes of this tale type, is sent to be killed or to undergo a series of trials, may be assisted by magic helpers, and typically cheats and/or destroys his enemies.[3] All of these narratives attest to the general attraction of stories that feature small, poor, or otherwise marginalized characters who against all odds triumph over seemingly invincible antagonists such as ogres, giants, or dragons.

Tales of this general type may begin with an introductory section in which three or more brothers leave or are forced to leave home (as in Hansel and Gretel, ATU 327A), find shelter at the house of an ogre, and are saved from death by cannibalism by the sharp wits of the youngest brother (as in ATU 327B, "The Brothers and the Ogre," best known in Charles Perrault's version, "Le Petit Poucet"). The siblings then arrive at a king's court, and in the central part of the tale the envious brothers convince the king to send their youngest brother to steal an ogre's treasures, usually three, which he accomplishes by means of a series of cunning ruses. His last task is to capture the ogre and deliver him to the king; the ogre is killed and the young man married to the king's daughter or given a post at the king's court.[4] The hero may be assisted in his tasks by human or animal helpers or by the ogre or giant's wife, though by his

last tasks Jack generally directs the action unassisted. In the “Jack and the Beanstalk” type the hero tends to be younger and, at least initially, more simple-minded; he trades the family cow for some beans, which overnight produce an enormous stalk that leads Jack to an upper world where an ogre lives. In a sense, ATU 328 ironically reconfigures the frontal combat with a dragon (or giant, or ogre) that is so often a part of traditional hero narratives; here the tale is lowered to the key of the ordinary man or woman, physical valor is substituted by wits, and the liberation of a princess (often a standard task of more elite heroes) by the more quantifiable appropriation of the giant’s massive treasures.

Versions of this tale type vary with respect to the attributes of the underdog hero. He may be the youngest of the family, a hunchback, a midget, or a woman. The envy that sometimes sets the hero’s adventures in motion may originate in his brothers, the king’s mother or courtiers, or others. And the antagonists may be ogres and giants, or dragons, sorcerers, and wild men. The reasons for Jack’s theft may also vary. In some early versions of “Jack and the Beanstalk” Jack acts out of retribution. For example, Benjamin Tabart’s 1807 “The History of Jack and the Bean-Stalk” includes an embedded backstory that recounts how the ogre previously murdered Jack’s father and made off with his wealth, resulting in a moralizing cast missing in the better-known canonical versions, such as Joseph Jacobs’s 1890 “Jack and the Beanstalk.”[5] In many British versions of “The Boy Steals the Ogre’s Treasure” the motif of envy is absent; Jack is introduced straight off as a skilled and wily giant-killer and the giant as a long-term scourge. For example, in an eighteenth-century chapbook telling, “The History of Jack and the Giant,” the giant Cormilan terrorizes Cornwall: “the People at his Approach would forsake their Habitations, then would he seize upon their Cows and Oxen, of which he would make nothing to carry on his Back half a Dozen at a Time; and as for their Sheep and Hogs he would tie them round his Waste like Bandaliers.”[6] In Jacobs’s version the “ogre problem” is discussed at town council, and Jack’s civic duty in eliminating the ogre is made even more explicit.

All of these variants share certain constants: the underdog hero who rises to distinguish himself; the vanquishing of radical alterity in the form of the giant, or multiple giants; and the expert use of cunning and

deception. Jack sometimes acquires magic objects that help in his tasks (in the version above, a coat of invisibility, a cap of knowledge, a sword of sharpness, and shoes of swiftness), and his giant killing may include the rescue of knights and damsels held captive by the giant, in the style of a chivalric liberator. In early British versions, Jack even ends up in service at King Arthur's court. In all cases, and in typical fairy-tale mode, by the end of the tale Jack has learned to negotiate the obstacles imposed upon him by both envious peers and the mightiest of antagonists, and he is rewarded for it.

This tale, as most fairy-tale types, has been read from a wide variety of critical angles. Psychological approaches, for example, discuss how Jack's adventures represent the "desirability of social and sexual self-assertion in the pubertal boy," and thus dramatize an oedipal struggle, whereas mythological readings concentrate on the motifs of "the detachment from the paternal world" and "the vital assumption of the ogre's powers," relating Jack to heroes such as Bellerophon.[7] Yet what is perhaps most suggestive about this tale type is that the attributes of Jacks across cultures may vary significantly, presenting different paradigms of fairy-tale exemplarity. Robert Darnton, in his discussion of Jack tales, contrasts the British and French traditions, noting that French tales tend to be more realistic and their heroes more superlative tricksters ("Cartesian," in his words), even if French giants are often less fearsome, appearing as "bonhommes" and local landlords. Darnton maintains that French folktales "show no sympathy for village idiots or for stupidity in any form," and that "French folktales demonstrate that the world is harsh and dangerous."[8] The folklorist Carl Lindahl, in his analysis of the mass migration of Jack tales to North America (in particular, to southern Appalachia), has also examined the ways the tales have been retold to fit their new circumstances: "the Appalachian Jack has a strong individualistic and capitalistic streak and survives more by cleverness and skill than by magic, while the English Jack needs his magic helpers and devices in a moral struggle that is a microcosm of class struggle." He concludes that this transformation of Jack reflects "Americans' faith in their ability to control their destinies" when allowed to live in a social order that enables success, and expresses "the conviction that life holds limitless possibility."[9]

As I turn to the Italian sampling of variants of ATU 328 that compose my case study, I will pay closest attention to this sort of socio-historical contextualization: to how different versions of a tale type reflect the particular times and places in which they were written or collected, and how the fairy tale "became a conflicted cultural field in which different social institutions and individual writers and artists used the tale either to bring about conformity or to question conformity to the dominant civilizing process of a society."[10]

Versions of "The Boy Steals the Ogre's Treasure," with their savvy and cunning heroes, are quite widely dispersed in Italy. In his index of Italian tale types, Renato Aprile documents variants from fifteen of the twenty Italian regions. On the contrary, there are very few instances in Italy of the "Jack and the Beanstalk" variant with its initially inexperienced and childlike hero. The only ATU 328A that Aprile mentions is a Piedmontese "Giacomino e l'orco," which closely follows British versions and is possibly an import ("Giacomino," the hero's name, is a direct translation of Jack). This is perhaps no surprise when we remember the importance of *ingegno* (creative use of wits) and the sometimes amoral tricksters who possess it as moving forces in the collection that set the stage for the development of European short fiction, Boccaccio's groundbreaking *Decameron* (1351).

The variants that I analyze here include tales by the greatest fabulists of the Italian tradition: Giambattista Basile, who wrote the first literary version of ATU 328 in Europe, "Corvetto," in the seventeenth century; Giuseppe Pitrè, from whose nineteenth-century collection I consider "Tridicinu" and "The Story of a Queen"; and Italo Calvino, whose 1956 volume of Italian fairy tales includes "Tabagnino the Hunchback." Although sharing many motifs, each of these versions reveals telling details about the context in which it was written, and each in its own way puts forth a polemical examination of the shifting requisites for becoming, and remaining, an accepted member of society. It is significant that these authors all lived and wrote at pivotal moments of construction, deconstruction, or reconfiguration of Italian national identity: the seventeenth century, a period of crisis and change when the cultural centrality of Renaissance Italy was ebbing, at the same time that the coordinates of modernity were taking shape; immediately after

Unification (1870), when despite its new political identity Italy still struggled to reconcile its historically diverse regional identities and to manage a generalized state of social and economic fragmentation; and the period following World War II and twenty years of fascism, in which questions about national identity presented themselves anew in full force. In a sense, the fairy tale, with its central themes of initiation and marvellous transformation, is a narrative choice made to order for times of shifting identities, for these prototypical stories of young adults who leave their homes, undergo arduous journeys and trials, and are compelled to confront what is unknown and threatening to them dramatize well the departure from familiar landscapes that accompany periods of political and cultural upheaval. Such times breed questions and anxieties about exemplarity, of the sort that the fairy tale always attempts to address: What should (now) constitute appropriate behavior? What type of attitudes may lead to a happy ending, for the individual and for the larger community?

“The Boy Steals the Ogre’s Treasure” in Italy

The trickster hero of Giambattista Basile’s “Corvetto” (tale 3.7) is the favorite courtier of the King of Wide River. Corvetto is an autobiographical figure of sorts, for Basile, who lived between 1575 and 1632, was a courtier, man of letters, soldier, and feudal administrator in and around his native city of Naples (under Spanish viceroyalty at the time) as well as in other parts of Italy. Best known during his lifetime for an ample literary production in literary Italian that spanned the genres of poetry, drama, pastoral, and romance, today he is remembered for *Lo cunto de li cunti* (*The Tale of Tales* [1634–6]), his groundbreaking collection of literary fairy tales written in a baroque register of the non-standard Neapolitan dialect. These tales are decidedly not for children; what we know about the circulation and audience of the collection indicates that it was probably read, or recited, in the courts and academies where Basile served, and even a quick look at *The Tale of Tales* confirms its status as an absolutely original, and labyrinthine, text. The hyperbolic descriptions and extravagant metaphor that Basile employs in his rewriting of familiar tale types such as Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, and Puss in Boots often overshadow the story line, as do references to ancient mythology, literary

classics, the music and theater of the time, and the monuments, popular culture, and daily life of Naples. Most importantly, the heroes and heroines of these tales rarely present unflawed or straightforward models of exemplary behavior. Instead, they experiment with diverse strategies for adapting to and intervening in a fairy-tale world that often resembles the reality in which Basile himself lived, a world marked by economic and political travail, social unrest, natural and manmade disasters, intense geographical exploration and the discovery of surprising "others," and revolutions in scientific and religious thought.

In "Corvetto" Basile participates in the widespread critique of court life that was a popular sub-genre of the time and on whose constrictions and hypocrisies he frequently commented in his other writings. The envy and backbiting rampant at court, "where everyone wears a mask," is made clear in the tale-teller's introduction – "if someone asked me where deception and fraud can most truly be found, I would direct them to no other place than the court" – and the author himself frequently interrupts the tale with similar laments: "Oh, hapless is he who is condemned to live in that hell which goes by the name of court, where flattery is sold by the basket…and deceits and betrayals weighed by the bushel!…Who can tell of the ditches of deceit dug in the king's head and then covered up with the light branches of zeal, so that [Corvetto] would fall in?"[11] Indeed, the king's courtiers, envious of Corvetto's special status, attempt to obstruct his career in every way possible, convincing the king to assign him three near-impossible tasks, which Corvetto performs successfully and with little effort. He must capture an ogre's magic horse, then steal the ogre's precious linens, and finally bring back the ogre's palace itself. But in this transfigured version of a court the envy and bad faith of evil rivals serve only to fuel the success of the virtuous hero, who by the end has risen to marry the king's daughter.

Corvetto is more undefined than other protagonists of this tale type. All we learn about him is that he is "a most respectable young man" who holds a special place in the heart of his employer, the king, and for this reason is hated by the other courtiers. The reader finds no examples of the "value and ingeniousness" that have led to his becoming the king's favorite other than learning that he is "enchanted" and thus able to evade the court intrigues and traps set for him, and he shows little cleverness or

creativity in his trials, which appear as mere formalities, never seriously threatening or even testing him. The world depicted by Basile is, in a word, static. Those who are virtuous are so for inscrutable reasons (whether Corvetto was endowed or born with his enchantment is not specified), and at the end Corvetto is recognized only for what he already was at the start.

Corvetto's exploits also have an equivocal flip side. The narrative of the virtuous courtier is traversed by an antagonist – the ogre – who though defined as "beastly and wild" and "evil" ultimately appears less savage than the court society that defines him as such, as evidenced by his cozy domestic life and above all by his exceptionally marvelous possessions that the king yearns to own. During his second trial, when Corvetto attempts to subtract the precious coverlet under which the ogre and his wife are sleeping, he witnesses this domestic scene: "The ogre woke up and told his wife not to pull so hard because she was uncovering him and he'd get a bellyache. 'Actually you're the one uncovering me,' answered the ogress, 'I've got nothing on me!' 'Where the devil is the blanket, then?' replied the ogre" (264). When Corvetto brings the linens back to the palace, the king is delighted to see that they are "embroidered with gold" and "decorated with a thousand devices representing various whims and thoughts," as well as being emblazoned with emblems of the fifth Duke of Alba, viceroy of the Kingdom of Naples from 1622 to 1629 (to whom Basile dedicated a volume of his Italian *Odes*), raising the interesting possibility that this highly sophisticated ogre is himself an emblem of the colonialized Neapolitan subject. The cultural inscriptions – devices and conceits – that *literally* cover the ogres suggest that they partake in the same cult of the marvelous that engages the king's world. What attracts the king to the ogre's possessions is that they are even more fabulous than anything he has. This is a suggestive reversal of the usual symbolic valence of the ogre or Wild Man in the Western imaginary. Attitudes toward this legendary figure, who served "as a screen onto which Renaissance Europeans…project[ed] their darkest and yet most compelling fantasies," also fueled the "mingled attraction and revulsion, longing and hatred" that Europeans expressed in their early modern encounters with New World populations.[12]

Corvetto's final task is to bring back the ogre's palace, a masterpiece of baroque architecture "fit for an emperor" that "causes art to be proud and nature to bow before it" (264). This time, when Corvetto arrives at the palace, he finds that the ogress has just given birth to an ogrlet, and that her husband is out inviting relatives to a celebration. Under the pretense of helping the ogress, Corvetto takes an ax and cuts off her head. He then digs a ditch, covers it with branches, and, when all of the returning ogres fall in, stones them to death. (It's interesting that this ditch is described in the same terms as the metaphorical "ditches of deceit" created by the other courtiers for Corvetto.) "Corvetto" is missing the typical ending where the ogre himself is stolen and brought back to the king to be killed – perhaps precisely because this ogre is not a circus attraction to be caged and exhibited, but a sophisticated lord whose alternative version of nobility constitutes a threat to the king's own status that is best to erase off-site rather than to advertise. Or perhaps because in this version the liquidation of evil is a distant second to the appropriation of the ogre's sophisticated cultural artifacts.

Ultimately, this tale embraces ambivalence, meshing with the ambivalence toward courtly life that Basile expressed throughout his own life. It stages the utopian fantasy of a beleaguered courtier finally recognized and rewarded for his "virtue," while at the same time it portrays this virtue as a magical illusion, since Corvetto demonstrates or develops no discernible qualities in the course of the tale other than blind obedience to the powerful and the willingness to perform unquestioningly any task necessary to further his own interest. Corvetto's massacre of the ogres carries a higher ethical price than the trials of better known "Jacks," for the ogres' elegant and humane civility stands in positive antithesis – almost as an antidote – to the compromised social life at the king's court, based on duplicity and ambition.

The second version of this tale, "Tridicinu," highlights the importance of craftiness for survival. It is part of the 1875 four-volume *Fiabe, novelle e racconti popolari siciliani* (*Sicilian Fairy Tales, Novellas, and Popular Tales*) by the great folklorist Giuseppe Pitrè (1841–1916), who cultivated a life-long interest in the history, customs, mentalities, and above all cultural production of the Sicilian common people that stemmed from his conviction that the "hidden" stories found in popular and folkloric

traditions constituted a true treasure of not only Sicilian but also national culture. Interestingly, ideas parallel to Pitrè's find expression in the works of political writers of the time, such as the Neapolitan Pasquale Villari, who in his *Lettere meridionali* poses the Italian South "both as an Other and the raw stuff of the nation."[13] Pitrè was particularly attentive to how the Sicilian narrators whose tales he transcribed adapted common fairy-tale motifs to fit their own particular contexts, and maintained that their tales formed a submerged narrative no less important than the grand master-narratives: "collecting was for Pitrè a 'subversive' act, and his diverse collections, taken as a whole, were intended to offer an alternative to the official history of Sicily."[14] Many of Pitrè's tales, published in the Sicilian dialect in which he heard them, model strategies for survival under the most difficult of conditions, and feature lower-class heroes whose only option is to set off in the world to improve their lot and whose only assets are their wits and their hunger.

In this tale, the hero Tridicinu ("Little Thirteen") is the youngest of thirteen sons. His brothers resent him for his sharp wits, because of which he is always the first to arrive at the family's barely laid table. Here, the tasks of stealing an ogre's winter blanket, horse, and bed bolster are announced by the king in a royal proclamation and are open to all, with a promised reward of a bushel of gold coins, and Tridicinu is proposed for the job by his hateful brothers. It is not clear, in this tale, where the attraction of these ordinary possessions lies. Perhaps in the king's choice of objects there is a transference of the longings of his impoverished subjects, for whom basic needs like a blanket, a mode of transport and instrument of labor (the horse), and a place to sleep (the bolster) are marvels in and of themselves.

Unlike Corvetto, Tridicinu possesses no magic other than his desire to change his destitute lot and turn the few opportunities for advancement that present themselves to his advantage. He is also quite realistic in his initial hesitance; before the first task, he exclaims to the king, "Your Majesty, how could I possibly steal the ogre's blanket? When he sees me, he'll eat me," and needs the king's reassurance before he can continue.[15] (During the first task the ogre's wife also, though unwittingly, helps Tridicinu by assuring her husband that no one has entered the house.) By his second task Tridicinu is already more enterprising, asking the king for

a silken ladder and honey cakes to facilitate the capture of the horse. Before the completion of his third task, the king shows increasing avidity and decreasing concern for Tridicinu's fate, and when Tridicinu complains that stealing the bolster will be impossible, the king replies, "That's not my concern. I must have it at all costs."[16] This time Tridicinu outdoes himself. He is initially caught by the ogress and put in a cage, where she fattens him up in preparation for a family feast where he will be the main dish. But on the day of the dinner he tricks *her* into getting into the oven, roasts her, and then constructs this elaborate scenario for the guests:

> When she was fully cooked, he took her out all neat and clean, divided her at the waist, cut up her legs into small portions and set them out on the table. Then he set her torso with her arms and head on her bed under the sheets and tied one string to her chin and another behind her brow.
>
> When the ogre arrived with his guests, they found the plates all set out on the table. Then they went to the bed and asked, "Madam ogress, would you like to eat?"
>
> Tridicinu tugged the string and the ogress raised her head to say "no."
>
> "What's the matter, are you tired?"
>
> Tridicinu, who was under the bed, tugged the other string, making her nod down for "yes." One of the guests, however, went up close, moved the sheets away, and discovered that the ogress was dead and only half a body.
>
> (178)

At this point Tridicinu, no longer content to use his cunning purely to survive, directs the scene like a puppet-master, flaunting his ability in a show of artistic virtuosity.

When as his final task Tridicinu is asked to bring back the ogre himself, he disguises himself as a monk, tells the ogre that he is trying to capture Tridicinu in a chest because he has killed the head monk, then tricks the ogre into getting in and brings him back to the king, where the ogre lives in chains for the remainder of his life. The king rewards Tridicinu with

“all the riches and treasures he could possibly give” and a place at his side “as a brave fellow of the very first rank” (179).

In another version of ATU 328 by Pitrè, “The Story of a Queen” (“Lo cunto di ’na riggina”), a king has seven daughters who pass their time on the balcony. Their father, worried that the townspeople may disapprove, orders them inside, and when they refuse, he locks them up, after which they dig an underground tunnel and escape in men’s clothes. Eventually they end up at a farm owned by a sorcerer, where after changing back into women’s clothes they ask to spend the night; when they overhear the sorcerer’s wife, Tristana, plotting to eat them, they exchange places with the sorcerer’s daughters, who are eaten instead. They then visit Vienna (dressed again as men) and eventually set up house in a palace (as women) in Genoa. Here they marry men of varying social stations: a count, a lord, a wealthy farmer and an artisan; the youngest sister, Agatuzza, “the most clever of all,” marries a king. Her envious brothers-in-law, having heard of the sisters’ experience at the sorcerer’s house, convince the king to have his wife perform the familiar series of tasks: she must steal the ring of the sorcerer’s wife, then the sorcerer’s horse, and finally his talking instrument, all of which she accomplishes with distinction and without any outside assistance. On her first visit Agatuzza makes an astute emotional appeal to the sorcerer couple’s cannibalistic instincts, asking if she can stay with them because “I want to regard you as my own mother and father.” When she is sufficiently fattened up, she, like Tridicinu, tricks the sorcerer’s wife into the oven and serves her to the sorcerer. Agatuzza then steals the horse by threatening to beat it if it makes a noise. Her attempt to retrieve the instrument results in her being captured again, since it warns the sorcerer of her arrival. But when she is alone with the sorcerer’s new wife, she pretends to be asleep and escapes with the instrument. In her final task she (dressed as a man) digs a hole in front of the sorcerer’s castle, where she says she wants to make a water geyser for his pleasure. He falls in, at which point she offers to help him out by having him climb onto some wooden boards she had put in the hole. She then nails the boards together, loads the sorcerer in the box onto her horse, and takes him back to her husband, where he is devoured by lions.

This protagonist, too, gives a virtuoso performance as heroine, savoring her superiority to the sorcerer to the point of taunting him verbally: “Hey,

sorcerer," she says, "I'm the one who made you kill your daughters, and I'm the one who stole the ring from your wife's finger!" She also speaks her mind to the capricious king, expressing her resentment at being asked to do tasks that a loving husband should never ask his wife to do: "Oh, you nasty dog! You wanted to send me to the guillotine! You wanted my death!" and "You let yourself be persuaded by anyone's words."[17] (This is the only king of these tales who is already a relative of the hero/heroine at the start of the action.) Perhaps most significantly, her continual switches back and forth between male and female dress – in general, she poses as a man when she takes on more active roles, such as her last task, and as a woman when her role is more passive, such as asking for hospitality – showcase the performative, and therefore cultural, nature of gender identity, against which the sisters had initially railed and of which the heroine is acutely aware, using it to full advantage. Indeed, in this tale it is the oppression of gender, not class, that fuels the impetus to leave home and roam the world. Agatuzza quickly demonstrates that she can be as astute as any male counterpart right from the start of her adventures.

Both of these tales by Pitrè treat the endeavor of searching for masters to serve, or for understanding husbands, with skepticism; their protagonists do what they must do to get by, but at the end the only resources they can truly count on are those that no one can steal from them: street smarts and quick wits. We might consider Pitrè's tales in the context of the critical historical juncture of post-Unification Italy, when the "southern question," a constant in Italian history, became increasingly pointed as attempts were made to forge a potential national identity, and the issues of economic and gender equality, concerns treated frequently in the literature and journalism of the time, became particularly pressing. Whereas northern political leaders looked to "the history of the medieval city-states and the Renaissance, with its art, its great men, and the Italian (Tuscan) language" as ideals, all models that excluded the south and that implied future developments – such as an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie and individualism – that had historically been extraneous to southern Italian identity, Pitrè's folkloric project strove to counter the stereotypical branding of Sicilian and Southern regional identity as exotic, primitive, amoral, criminal, and "other" with alternative narrative tales of survival

that, he felt, showed the most intimate and genuine self of the "other" Italy of the south.[18]

By the 1950s it had become clear, in Italy, that the ideals of social and economic justice inspired by the anti-Fascist Resistance and the hope for building a different postwar moral and political order were misplaced. The years following World War II had "marked the triumph of continuity" in which "most of the old personnel and many of the former institutions remained untouched," to such a degree that some have compared the Christian Democrats' "colonization of the state" in the 1950s to the expansion of the fascist party in the 1930s.[19] In this same period folklorists, ethnologists, and literary scholars (such as Giuseppe Cocchiara, Ernesto de Martino, Alberto Cirese, Franco Fortini, and Paolo Toschi), many active in the same political groups that were becoming increasingly disillusioned with Italy's postwar landscape, engaged in discussions on the relation of Italian folklore to national culture, often echoing Antonio Gramsci's view (not dissimilar from Pitrè's) in his "Observations on Folklore" (1935) that popular folklore contains a "concept of the world" radically different from hegemonic worldviews, especially in Italy, where an authentically national heritage based on a connection between the "people" and intellectuals had never come to be. Recovering this heritage was seen as part of the overall attempt to fashion a model of national unity that – this time – might be truly inclusive, and as a catalyst for raising consciousness in a subaltern culture whose active role folkloric narratives often celebrate.

This was the context in which, in 1954, Italo Calvino was commissioned by the publisher Einaudi to assemble a master collection of Italian folktales akin to the Grimms' *Children's and Household Tales*, still lacking in Italy. Calvino (1923–85), a resistance fighter during World War II and later a member of the Italian Communist party, was by the postwar period already emerging as one of the most promising, and experimental, writers of his generation. From his earliest literary activity, when he adhered at least in principle to the neorealist school, Calvino sensed an affinity between the interplay of variety and repetition present in folk- and fairy tales and the narrative dynamic that he aspired to in his own writing, in which the use of the marvelous was directed toward finding meaning in the here-and-now. In 1956 the now classic 200 tales (the same number as

the Grimms' tales) of *Fiabe italiane* (*Italian Folktales*) were published, offering a wide variety of tale types and geographical representation (all twenty Italian regions, plus Corsica). Calvino selected his materials primarily from nineteenth-century collections such as Pitrè's, but embraced an openly "halfway scientific" method in which he creatively recast the tales by imposing "stylistic unity" and in some cases changing details of the tales.

The tale "Tabagnino the Hunchback" ("Il gobbo Tabagnino") is Calvino's rewriting of a tale from a nineteenth-century Bolognese collection, Carolina Coronedi Berti's *Favole bolognesi* (*Bolognese Fairy Tales*, 1883). The hero, the cobbler Tabagnino, is another poor but enterprising hero, "as crafty as the Devil himself."[20] Unable to live by his trade, he sets out from home and comes upon the house of a Wild Man and his wife, where he asks for shelter. During Tabagnino's first night there, the Wild Man eats so much macaroni that he loses interest in human meat, offers Tabagnino what is left of his meal, and ends the evening in "friendly conversation" with him. It is during this conversation that Tabagnino, through carefully crafted compliments, elicits information about the Wild Man's precious possessions: a coverlet embroidered in gold and silver, a wand that brings good weather, a chest full of money, a mare that runs like the wind, and a talking parrot. Later, after leaving the Wild Man, Tabagnino finds himself at the King of Portugal's court, and when he tells the king of the Wild Man's objects, he is enlisted to steal them.

For the first two tasks Tabagnino accepts the king's magic assistance (in the form of a magic wand that divides water), but for the subsequent ones he creates his own ingenious solutions, for which he merely asks the king to supply him with what he needs. To subtract the coverlet he requests a bag full of "live hornets that have fasted for seven or eight days" (158), which he releases under the Wild Man's covers while he is sleeping, causing him to throw off the coverlet and to flee the room screaming; for the magic weather wand he uses a bag of walnuts to simulate a hailstorm on the roof of the Wild Man's house, causing him to place the wand on the roof. Next, Tabagnino disguises himself as a woodsman and begins to fell a large tree. The Wild Man offers to help, and when his hands get caught in the tree, he instructs Tabagnino to ask his wife for two wedges. Tabagnino asks her for the two bags of money instead; the wife is not convinced, and

Tabagnino calls back to the Wild Man, “Is she to give me just one, or both of them?,” to which he responds, “Both of them, and be quick about it!” (160). Tabagnino steals the mare by poking her in the belly through the stable wall with an awl, causing her to become agitated and the Wild Man to put her outside for the night; the talking parrot is seduced with trifles, cookies, and other sweets. Tabagnino’s final task is to bring back the Wild Man himself, for which the king offers the assistance of his “finest tailors and wigmakers” in order to transform Tabagnino into a fine gentleman – perhaps signaling his imminent social rise – whom the Wild Man does not recognize when asked for assistance in constructing a coffin for the dead Tabagnino. In the usual fashion, the Wild Man is conned into being measured for what is actually his own coffin, resulting in his entrapment and destruction.

This is another classic trickster tale, which on the surface depicts a civil kingdom liberated from destructive, wild tendencies by the ingenuity of an underdog hero able to defeat a formidable opponent, coupled with the forces of a supportive king. Yet here, too, the king is ultimately portrayed as interested only in his own whims and enrichment: as in Pitrè’s tales, he curtly counters Tabagnino’s protests about the deathly nature of his tasks (“That is not my concern. Think it over and manage the best you can” and “Think hard, or you’ll lose your head”). Likewise, the Wild Man and his wife, though cannibals, are not awe-inspiring monsters, but show some of the same “humanity” noted in the ogres in “Corvetto.”

Indeed, Calvino’s changes to the Bolognese tale are minimal yet significant, tending either to blur the lines between the “wild” and the “civilized” or to accentuate Tabagnino’s active and enterprising intervention in his own fate. For example, Tabagnino’s “friendly conversation” with the Wild Man during a moment of amnesty from cannibalism is absent from the original; the king’s role in helping Tabagnino to complete his tasks is downplayed in Calvino’s version, which underlines the hero’s control; and there are several fewer episodes in Calvino than in the original, resulting in a streamlined and lighter read. Yet perhaps the most significant aspect of this tale and of Calvino’s *Folktales* as a whole lies in the endeavor to transport tales previously dispersed in little-known collections and written in impenetrable dialects to the literary mainstream, thus making accessible Italy’s rich heritage of

folk narrative in a way that it had never been before. The source of "Tabagnino," as for many of the *Folktales*, was published at the height of folkloric production in Italy (1883), a moment that, as we have seen, coincided with an equally intense reformulation of the parameters of national identity. That Calvino's own project came about at another such moment further confirms the conviction on the part of folklorists, men of letters, and public intellectuals that these "little narratives" can tell big stories about individual agency, the negotiation of power, the treatment of difference, and so many more concerns that lie at the heart of constructing the foundations of civil society.

Happily ever after?

What can we observe, in conclusion, about these Italian variants of ATU 328? First, that their heroes include realistic and socio-historically defined types: Corvetto the courtier, Agatuzza the obsessively protected young woman, Tabagnino the cobbler who cannot live by his trade. Second, that in all of the tales except "Corvetto," the protagonists' cleverness, skill, and adaptability in navigating their adventures are paramount to their success. Only Corvetto possesses magical powers himself; the other heroes receive little or no magical help and equally sporadic human assistance, which in any case tends to disappear over the course of the tales. The figures of authority in the tales upon whom the protagonists are forced to rely (kings) petulantly and relentlessly hanker for power and its material trappings, and the heroes of the tales often do not hide their distrust or resentment of these kings. Finally, just as these tales question the positive authority of the king, so the absolute negative authority of the ogre or giant, the emblem of anti-social and anti-civic behavior par excellence, appears tenuous. The elimination of most of these antagonists is propelled by the formal necessities of plot, not by the need for moral closure, since besides being genetically cannibalistic, none of them has offended human society in any specific way – quite differently, for example, from many of the British Jacks – and some are portrayed as almost likeable.

What should we make of the fact that these tales are populated by oblivious rulers, not-so-terrible antagonists, and heroes who alternate

between a wily bending of the rules, opportunistic subservience, and refusal to accept the "rules of the game" as they are dictated at large? If the fairy tale is both a "product of the imaginary of a community and its memory" and "an instrument used to control and live contemporaneity,"[21] then (with all due prudence when making generalizations) perhaps we can read these details in light of the reality that, throughout Italian history, the relationship of the "everyman" social subject to the institutions and the networks of power that engender and support them has more often than not been tipped toward ambivalence and skepticism.

From Corvetto the obedient courtier, to the master trickster Tridicinu whose tasks become virtuoso performances in the art of manipulating others, to Agatuzza's tale of rebellion against the world of fathers and kings, to Tabagnino's somewhat more harmonious rapport with his king – each of these tales and their heroes (and authors) reflects not only on what it takes to win, but also on who does the winning and who does the losing, what winning implies, and the prices it may cost. Clear-cut messages and characters are foreign to these tales, whose heroes put into question the binaries of "good" and "evil," of protagonism and antagonism. The open-ended and polemical interrogation of authority and exemplarity that we find in some form in all of these tales suggests a broader preoccupation with issues of power, justice, and truth-telling, as well as a search for new ways of understanding. Heroes may reveal cultural aspirations, values, and ideals, but also the uncertainties and failures of the status quo; "the liveliness, and durability of cultures requires that there be space for figures whose function is to uncover and disrupt the very things that cultures are based on."[22] In this sense these tricksters *are* culture heroes. By interrogating established hierarchies and pushing limits, they encourage us to continue their work of journeying to the outer edges of culture in order to better explore its own lacks.

Notes

1 Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*, 2nd ed. (Princeton University Press, 2003), 86–7.

2 Italo Calvino, *Italian Folktales*, trans. George Martin (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), xviii–xix.

3 See Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York: The Dryden Press, 1946), 319–28, and Paul Radin's classic *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956).

4 See Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography*, Folklore Fellows Communications, 3 vols. (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004), vol. I, 216.

5 For Tabart's 1807 version, see Iona and Peter Opie, *The Classic Fairy Tales* (Oxford University Press, 1974), 214ff. Jacobs's tale is in his *English Fairy Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 65–72. Jacobs's volume also includes the canonical version of this tale type with a female protagonist, "Molly Whuppie."

6 Opie and Opie, *Classic Fairy Tales*, 65.

7 Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1976), 184; Renato Aprile, *Indice delle fiabe popolari italiane di magia*, 2 vols. (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2000), 438–9.

8 Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 53, 55.

9 "Jack Tales," in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*, ed. Donald Haase, 3 vols. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 509; Carl Lindahl, "Jacks: The Name, the Tales, the American Traditions," in *Jack in Two Worlds: Contemporary North American Tales and Their Tellers*, ed. William Bernard (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), xxxi. See also, for example, the ideological reading of Jack tales in Brian Szumsky, "The House That Jack Built: Empire and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century British Versions of 'Jack and the Beanstalk,'"

Marvels & Tales 13.1 (1999): 11–30, and in Jennifer Schacker, "Slaying Blunderboer: Cross-Dressed Heroes, National Identities, and Wartime Pantomime," *Marvels & Tales* 27.1 (2013): 52–64.

10 Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 2006), x–xi.

11 Giambattista Basile, *The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones*, trans. Nancy L. Canepa (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), 262.

12 Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 21, 22.

13 John Dickie, "Stereotypes of the Italian South," in *The New History of the Italian South*, ed. Robert Lumley and Jonathan Morris (University of Exeter Press, 1997), 129.

14 Jack Zipes, "The Indomitable Giuseppe Pitrè," in *The Collected Sicilian Folk and Fairy Tales of Giuseppe Pitrè*, 2 vols. (New York: Routledge, 2009), vol. I, 7, 12.

15 Pitrè, *Collected Sicilian Folk and Fairy Tales*, vol. II, 176.

16 *Ibid.*, vol. I, 177.

17 *Ibid.*, vol. I, 186, 188.

18 Gabriella Gibaudi, "Images of the South," in *Italian Cultural Studies*, ed. David Forgacs and Robert Lumley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 73.

19 Christopher Duggan, *A Concise History of Italy* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 261.

20 Calvino, *Italian Folktales*, 157.

21 Michele Rak and Domenico Rea, eds., *Fiabe campane* (Milan: Mondadori, 1984), 50.

22 Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 9.

7 Exploring empathy and ethics in tales about three brothers

Maria Nikolajeva

Fairy-tale characters are not normally associated with a rich internal life. Moreover, our affective engagement with fairy-tale actors is impeded by their clear-cut narrative roles and the unequivocal allegiance to good or evil. However, the analytical tools provided by cognitive poetics, a field of inquiry at the crossroads of literary criticism and cognitive science, allow a more nuanced discussion of readers' or listeners' emotional involvement.[1] Two central concepts of cognitive poetics are theory of mind (the ability to understand other people's thoughts, beliefs, and intentions) and empathy (the ability to understand other people's emotions). Although fictional characters obviously have no thoughts or emotions, cognitive poetics explores, among other things, how human brains can, through mirror neurons, respond to fictional events and characters as if they were real, and how fiction can stimulate such responses through various narrative devices. With empathy and theory of mind, it is possible to discern the implicit interiority that explains why we engage with fairy-tale characters in the first place, and how we make inferences about their motivations and judge their ethical choices.

Each of the various perspectives employed to study fairy tales, including the structural, socio-historical, psychoanalytic, and educational, opens up a different dimension of the tales in general as well as of particular tales. Since cognitive poetics is a relatively new direction of inquiry, there are thus far hardly any studies of fairy tales using a cognitive approach. Patrick Hogan's study of narrative universals is among the few to connect narrative structure with emotional engagement.[2] Existing literary cognitive studies focus predominantly on novels in which the roundedness and dynamism of characters allow a thorough examination of interiority.[3]

It is something of a challenge to employ the framework of cognitive poetics to consider texts repeatedly identified as deliberately lacking any psychological depth. It is natural to agree with scholars who claim that in reading fairy tales we align with heroes merely on account of their being

heroes, and either do not care about or feel aversion toward characters who prevent heroes from obtaining their goals. However, the central argument of cognitive criticism is that we engage with fiction because we are interested in other people and, through fiction, can enter other people's minds in a way impossible in real life. True, the minds of fairy-tale heroes are seldom transparent in the same way novel protagonists' frequently are, which allows analyses of fictional interiority performed by cognitive literary scholars. Yet our real-life experience only offers us possibilities to understand other people's minds through their behavior and to a lesser extent direct speech. In daily life we are constantly obliged to read other people's facial expressions, body language, and movements to understand and anticipate their actions and reactions.

In real life, misreadings can be fatal. Fiction allows us to test our theory of mind – that is, our ability to understand other people's thoughts – without running the risk of perilous misunderstandings. Most fiction revolves around comic or tragic misinterpretation of actions. Although fairy tales lack the psychological depth of a novel, their straightforwardness makes them suitable training fields for theory of mind. Indeed, why would we remain fascinated by fairy tales long after the emergence of the novel if we were not deeply engaged with the characters? Possibly, we engage with fairy tales differently from how we engage with novel characters; yet there is doubtless a strong engagement at work. All storytelling is about relationships, and most scholars agree that fairy tales were initially instructions in human behavior. Cognitive criticism claims that storytelling is evolutionarily dependent, meaning that it guides human behavior essential for survival. In reading fairy tales we inevitably engage with characters' interiority even though, or perhaps especially because, there are no visible expressions of their thought and emotions in the text. If this is true, a hypothesis that still needs to be explored through experiments, fairy tales are substantially more complex than we at present are prepared to accept.

The Russian fairy tale "The Frog Princess," featured in Alexander Afanasev's world-famous collection *Russian Folktales* (1855–63), is the tale of a magical bride, appearing in various versions in all cultures, the most famous perhaps being the selkie story. The magical bride, transformed into an animal or bird, sheds her skin or feathers, and her

husband foolishly hides or burns them to keep her in human shape. “The Frog Princess” includes elements from other well-known stories, such as difficult tasks and a magician without a heart in his body. It is also a prominent example of the three brothers tale type, which has not received the same attention as the three sisters type, probably because recent fairy-tale scholarship has been informed by gender studies with a focus on female protagonists. While the three sisters type reflects the desire for an advantageous marriage and the youngest sister’s reward for her virtues, the three brothers narrative is connected with the sons’ birthright and inheritance (as in “Puss in Boots” or “The Firebird”). Traditionally, in cultures with majorat inheritance, the younger sons would be expected to seek their fortune elsewhere. The tale either sets a number of difficult tasks for the brothers and allows the youngest to win, or it takes him to a new location where he is elevated in status. A symbolic or actual murder of the father is a frequent component. The combination of all these elements make “The Frog Princess” a particularly interesting narrative in terms of the various agents’ relationships, where a cognitive approach prompts questions about interiority well hidden beyond the surface.

Dismissing, for the sake of argument, the inevitable narrative logic of the fairy tale, as Propp or other structuralist scholars would view it, I will in the following explore, first, whether the tale allows an emotional engagement at all; second, whether it encourages it; and third, exactly how this engagement happens. Deliberately pushing my interpretation to the extreme, I will examine the tale episode by episode, to demonstrate the shifts in narrative perspective and subsequently in the reader’s alignment. I will refer to the recipient of the tale as the reader, although it can also be a listener. I will use my own retelling of the tale, taking into consideration interesting elements from different versions.

> *Once upon a time there was a king who had three sons. The youngest was called Prince Ivan.*

Already in this initial situation, the text manipulates the reader to adopt a certain subject position. The king lacks individual traits. Some versions introduce a queen, who never appears in the story again and can thus be totally ignored. The emotional axis in the beginning of the tale is between

father and sons. In some versions, the princes' virtues are described: young, valiant, handsome, or, with the recurrent Russian fairy-tale pattern, "the like of whom is not to be told in tales nor written by pen." These are standard attributes that do not necessarily attract our attention. However, only one of the princes has a name, a typical fairy-tale hero name, similar to Hans in German and Jack in English, that singles him out as hero. He is the youngest, and fairy-tale conventions lead us to anticipate that he will be treated unjustly and that therefore our sympathy should be with him. We may or may not be aware of the legal implications of majorat, but emotionally our subject position is firmly placed with the character whose identity is presented as strongest. Although Prince Ivan is only emphasized as heroic through his name, it is sufficient to prompt the reader to select him as "identification object." Here, however, cognitive poetics makes its first objection to this conventional response. Immersive identification – that is, aligning with the character's perceptual and conceptual point of view – precludes empathy and mind-reading, and thus impedes any ethical judgment that readers can impose on characters (the fairy-tale hero is above morals). Instead, empathic identification implies that although we do not share the perspective and ethical values of certain characters, we are still curious about their thoughts and feelings, and able to evaluate them.

> *One day the king summoned his sons and said: "My dear children, you are now of age, it is time for you to choose your brides."*
>
> *"Where shall we find our brides?"*
>
> *"Take your bows and shoot an arrow in different directions. Wherever the arrow falls, there choose your bride."*

We may wonder about the king's motivations, and we may recognize the situation from a vast number of stories in which a father tests his sons or daughters in order to choose the most deserving heir. *King Lear*, based in its opening scenes on this tale type, is focused on the father and is, as Harold Bloom claims, one of the earliest instances of Western literature in which interiority is portrayed.[4] In "The Frog Princess" the center of attention is shifted toward the sons. Employing embedded mind-reading we may ask: What does the king think about his sons' feelings as he gives

them his orders? What do the sons think about their father's feelings? What do they think about each other's feelings? The narrative leaves substantial gaps for our cognitive and affective engagement. First, the brothers may feel distressed and even angry that the father entrusts the important decision of their marriage to chance. The eldest brother probably feels most offended since the father's arrangement potentially infringes on his birthright. He may feel that the father is not content with him as an heir and hopes to find a loophole in succession. He may feel resentful toward his youngest brother. The middle brother has less reason to dislike Ivan, but he may also suspect his father of unfair play. All three brothers doubtless feel anxious. Since the initial situation has not encouraged the reader to empathize with the older brothers, our subject position is aligned with Ivan. His stakes are the highest. He is the farthest from inheritance, and an advantageous marriage can improve both his wealth and his social status. However, he may feel that his brothers are cautious and envious of him, which definitely makes him upset.

> *The oldest brother discharged his arrow, and it fell into a nobleman's court, and the nobleman's daughter picked it up. The second brother discharged his arrow, and it flew into the court of a rich merchant, and the merchant's daughter picked it up. Prince Ivan discharged his arrow, and the arrow fell in a muddy swamp, and a croaking frog seized hold of it*.

The omniscient narrative perspective of this passage provides the reader with privileged knowledge about the characters. We know where their arrows have fallen, while they do not. The emotion that most likely dominates the brothers' minds is apprehension, a mixture of curiosity and fear. Curiosity is a social or higher-cognitive emotion, involving two or more agents.[5] Fear, however, is a basic emotion (alongside joy, distress, anger, and disgust), evolutionarily conditioned, since it is essential for survival. The brothers do not know what they may find at the place where their arrows have fallen or what dangers they may meet on the way. Fear ensures that they proceed with caution.

The older brothers went to search for their arrows and found them at once: the first in the nobleman's court, the second in the merchant's court. But Prince Ivan could not find his arrow for a long time. For two days he wandered over woods and mountains.

We do not care much about the older brothers. We know their fates already. One has secured his high social status; the other is marrying into wealth. We assume that they have achieved their goals and feel happy. They are likely to believe that the father will be satisfied with their achievements, since their goal – an advantageous marriage – coincides with the father's. But how do we engage with Ivan's emotions? Fairy-tale conventions prompt us to have faith in a positive outcome, but let us remember that our brains respond emotionally nanoseconds ahead of the rational response. Let us consider what happens during these nanoseconds, and how empathy is activated. To begin with, Ivan's emotional ordeal is stretched over two days. He is anxious to find his bride; he may also be anxious not to disappoint his father. He is frightened of his father's imminent wrath, or he may love his father and feel unwilling to make him unhappy. Love is a social emotion that implies that two people have an identical goal, to be happy and see the counterpart happy. Each person's happiness can only be achieved alongside the other's. Let us assume that the king loves his youngest son more than the other two, and that Ivan knows it. Then he also knows that his, Ivan's, distress will make the father distressed. Ivan's duty toward his father is to be happy; therefore, he is anxious about the outcome of his quest.

Let us now play a different scenario. Let us assume that the king for some reason hates his youngest son. If Ivan does not know it, he believes that his father wants him to be happy. Ivan believes that his father cannot be happy if his beloved son is unhappy; therefore Ivan feels anxious and perhaps guilty in advance because he does not live up to his father's expectations. If Ivan knows that his father hates him, and if Ivan loves his father (which makes him unhappy), Ivan may hope that through a successful outcome to his quest he will win his father's affection. Since we have no access to the king's mind, we do not know which of the two options – whether he likes or dislikes his youngest son – is correct. However, both options lead to anxiety on Ivan's part, which we share.

…and on the third day he came to the muddy swamp. There he saw the croaking frog holding his arrow.

The central emotion evoked in this scene is surprise. The reader knows that Ivan's arrow has been picked up by a frog, but Ivan does not. We are outside the tale, and although we may find a real-life frog disgusting, we are not directly affected by its presence. Ivan is inside the tale, confronted with the disgusting frog. The tale asks the reader to dissociate from the protagonist's subjectivity and instead consider his feelings when he realizes that his bride-to-be is a disgusting animal. Surprise is a social emotion that can be equally connected to the basic emotions of joy and distress: it can be a pleasant surprise or an unpleasant one. In Ivan's case, there is no doubt about his feelings. He is unpleasantly surprised by the sight of the frog. Moreover, of the five basic emotions, his is most likely disgust. Disgust is perhaps the most interesting and elusive of the five basic emotions. Its evolutionary function is to prevent us from eating poisonous food. Animals such as rats, spiders, snakes, and frogs typically cause disgust because they are inedible and may be poisonous (culinary fascination with frogs is a recent phenomenon). Disgust is closely connected to fear and signals the brain to command the body to move away.

Prince Ivan was about to run away, but the frog said:

"Croak-croak, Prince Ivan! Come forward and take your arrow, and take me as your bride."

Prince Ivan felt distressed and said:

"How can I take you as my bride? Everybody will laugh at me."

"Take me, Prince Ivan, you will not regret it."

Concise as it is, the dialogue is laden with affective content. Ivan is unpleasantly surprised and disgusted by his find; he is profoundly unhappy, for himself and for his father; he may be frightened at the thought of his father's imminent wrath. But he is also surprised by the frog addressing him, which makes him turn back and listen. Surprise and

curiosity override fear and disgust. What readers now need to consider is the frog. Cognitive poetics claims that anthropomorphizing is natural and imperative for our understanding of the world; therefore, we have no problems ascribing animals consciousness, especially in fictional stories.[6] The fairy-tale convention makes it easier still to suspend disbelief when we encounter a talking frog, but do we see the frog as sentient? Do we engage at all with the frog's emotions? It may seem that we have no reason to do so, but the tale actually compels us to consider her mental state, albeit in second degree, through Ivan's mind.

> *Prince Ivan thought for a while, took up the croaking frog, wrapped her in a cloth, and brought her back to his kingdom.*

What are Ivan's thoughts? What makes him overcome his disgust and fear of his father's dissatisfaction? He may realize that it is his destiny and duty to marry whoever has picked up his arrow. This is an ethical choice: he must follow his father's wish even if it goes against his own feelings. He may think that his father would be angry if he comes back without a bride. However, the tale makes us see beyond Ivan's mind and engage in embedded mind-reading: what does Ivan think about the frog's feelings? Despite his disgust, Ivan purportedly also anthropomorphizes the frog, especially since she possesses language and by extension consciousness. Perhaps Ivan feels sorry for the frog. If so, he has developed empathy, the ability to understand other beings' emotions. He understands that the frog might be distressed if he rejects her, just as a human bride would be distressed. He may be curious about the frog's promise: what can she offer him that would be worth his sacrifice? Whatever the reason, Ivan's conversation with the frog leads him to change his mind. He anticipates his father's and brothers' surprise, perhaps disgust; possibly his father's anger; most likely everybody's mockery, likely silent pity. It requires courage to face this situation. From a flat character consisting mostly of a name, Ivan emerges as a strong personality with moral qualities beyond the conventional fairy-tale hero's inherent goodness.

> *The oldest brothers came back to their father, joyful and happy, and told him where they had found their arrows. Prince Ivan told his story*

too, distressed and weeping: "How can I marry a frog?" The brothers started laughing at him, but the father said:

"Nothing doing; you must marry the frog."

On coming home, Ivan's feelings have changed again. Seeing his brothers happy highlights his own misery. The brothers' reaction is understandable. It is ridiculous to be married to a frog. They feel relieved that their own destinies are better. On the other hand, an empathetic response to misfortune should be pity and compassion. If the brothers love each other, as brothers frequently do (except in fairy tales), we expect them to feel sorry for their brother rather than humiliate him. Since our empathy lies with Ivan (in the sense that we share his goal, to be happy), anyone who prevents his happiness evokes our dislike. In plain words, we infer that the older brothers are evil, or at the very least, dislike Ivan.

The older brothers have no logical reason to hate their younger brother. He is out of competition for the inheritance. But if the king prefers his youngest son, and the older brothers know it, then they have every reason to envy and hate Ivan. Moreover, they can view the king's arrangement for their marriages as an attempt to favor Ivan. All the more reason to hate Ivan and be angry with the father. Hatred is a social form of disgust: it is based on the fear of the object of hatred preventing the achievement of a goal. But hatred is a destructive emotion and commonly leads to guilt. If the older brothers hate Ivan, they inevitably feel guilty about doing so. They may also feel guilty toward the father for humiliating his favorite son.

Our possible affective responses toward the father's actions are multiple. If Ivan is indeed the favorite, we can assume that the king is unhappy with the outcome of his son's quest, but too proud to rescind his previous orders. Pride is a social emotion that inhibits showing true feelings toward a counterpart (*Pride and Prejudice* is a classic literary example). Pride is a destructive emotion since it injures the object of love and prevents the ultimate mutual goal of happiness. Instead, it amplifies distress. On the other hand, if we assume that the king dislikes his youngest son, he is happy with the outcome. Yet feeling happy at the cost of somebody else's distress inevitably causes guilt. So whatever the king's

feelings toward his youngest son, the outcome of his quest leads to the king's distress. Ostensibly then, his further actions are dictated by the attempt to repair his state of mind and find some way out of his own and his son's suffering. His choice is bizarre, but this is not the point. The king is desperate, so why not test the aptitude of his daughters-in-law, which may bring about some advantage for the disadvantaged youngest offspring.

The nature of the trials varies in different versions. In the best-known version, the first trial is to sew a shirt.

> *Prince Ivan returned home in deep distress, his head hanging lower than his shoulders*.
>
> *"Qua, qua! Prince Ivan!" asked the frog. "Wherefore are you so sad? Has your father been displeased with you?"*
>
> *"Why should I not be sad? My father has commanded you to sew him a shirt by tomorrow."*
>
> *"Do not despair, Prince Ivan. Go to bed and sleep; the morning is wiser than the evening."*

Once again the text states explicitly that Ivan is distressed, amplified in Russian by a rhyming, metaphorical expression of his state of mind. However, there is a wide range of emotions behind the simple labels of distressed or sad. Ivan may be angry with his father for giving him an impossible task. He may think that his beloved father does not love him anymore. Not only has he made Ivan marry a disgusting frog, but he is also prepared to humiliate him publicly. Ivan envies his brothers who have human brides capable of fulfilling the king's wish. He is ashamed of his wife who he believes is unable to meet the king's expectations. He feels guilty toward his wife because he feels ashamed of her – after all, he has consented to marry her. All these are social emotions that reflect the complex social configurations in the tale: between father and son, between brothers, and between spouses. On the surface, however, the only visible emotion is the basic one of distress.

Moreover, the reader is again invited to engage in embedded mind-reading. The frog realizes that Ivan is sad. She assumes that he is sad

because he has heard something unpleasant from his father. She believes that Ivan loves his father and therefore feels sad if the father is displeased with him. Actually, the father is not yet displeased with his son, but Ivan anticipates that the father will be angry when he is unable to produce a shirt sewn by his wife. The frog knows, but Ivan does not, and at this point the reader does not know either, that she is fully capable of fulfilling the king's task. She is upset that she cannot share her secret with Ivan. She anticipates that he will be upset when he learns that she has been deceiving him.

> *The frog put Ivan to bed, shed her frog-skin, and turned into a beautiful maiden, Vasilisa the Wise, the like of whom is not to be told in tales nor written by pen.*

The frog is a shape-shifter. We are not told until much later that she is only temporarily enchanted, and we do not know her true shape. We assume that the frog has a good reason not to share her secret with her husband. Yet our privileged knowledge once again detaches us from the protagonist. In a way, we are complicit with the frog. This prepares the way for our judgment on Ivan's unwise behavior later in the tale.

> *In the morning Prince Ivan awoke and was overjoyed to find the shirt, which he took forthwith to the king.*

Ivan is happy because his fears have subsided, and he will be able to please his father. Presumably, he does not care how the frog has managed to sew the shirt, and he does not care whether he hurts her feelings by failing to show gratitude. Ingratitude is a morally dubious behavior, and we empathize with the frog, who has every reason to be upset by Ivan's indifference. Unless, that is, we identify immersively with Ivan and care no more for the other characters' feelings than he does.

Meanwhile, the king is dissatisfied with the shirts of the other two wives and pleased with the frog's shirt. Following our earlier line of argument, he is either happy that his favorite son has passed the first trial or angry if he dislikes Ivan and his task was a strategy to get rid of him. None of the

agents seems to wonder exactly how Ivan's wife has managed to perform the task – except the two wives who now step into the emotional arena of the tale. The king wants to test the baking skills of his daughters-in-law and commands each to bake a loaf of bread. The two wives think, quite correctly, that the frog has a secret. In some versions, they say explicitly that she must be a sorceress. They send a spy to watch how the frog is going to bake her loaf. The clever frog knows that her sisters-in-law are envious of her. Envy is a strong negative emotion that prevents happiness until the object of envy is eliminated. The frog is a serious threat to the other wives' happiness; if they fail, the king may disinherit their husbands. They must therefore learn the frog's secret at any cost. The frog outsmarts her rivals by pretending to pour the dough directly into the oven. Against common sense, the sisters do the same with disastrous results, while the frog, turning into the beautiful maiden Vasilisa, makes a marvelously decorated loaf much to the king's satisfaction. The sisters now have stronger reasons than ever to hate the frog. Their happiness is in danger. In evoking our affective response, there is now a significant shift toward the competition between the women rather than the brothers. We have no more reasons to dislike the wives than we have to dislike the brothers; yet our empathy is with Ivan and the frog. Moreover, since we are initiated into the frog's secret, we need to be able to empathize with Ivan who does not know how his frog wife has managed to perform the task. What does he think; how does he feel? Naturally, he is curious about his wife. He is proud of her and happy that his father is pleased. Yet he is probably also upset because his wife is obviously someone other than who she pretends to be.

The magical bride/groom tales are about sexuality and frequently about accepting the sexual partner chosen by the parent. It is difficult, if not impossible, to infer how Ivan feels toward his wife. In many tales of the magical bride or bridegroom, the shape-shifting partner assumes human form during the night. "The Frog Princess" is not explicit on this matter; we are told that the frog wakes her husband to take the gifts to the king. Whatever happens in the marital bed, Ivan must know that his wife has secrets she does not share with him. He may not love her yet, but he is likely to be upset by her secrecy.

Ivan’s troubles are not yet over, as the king commands his sons to bring their wives to a feast, because he wants to identify the best dancer. Once again, the frog tells Ivan not to worry and to go to sleep, and in the morning she tells him to go to the feast ahead of her, and she will follow soon:

> *“When you hear a rumbling and a knocking, do not get frightened, but say: ‘Hither comes my dear little Froggy in her little basket!’”*

The frog knows that Ivan must have realized that she is no ordinary frog. But she knows that he will feel embarrassed to arrive alone; perhaps afraid to provoke his father’s anger. She therefore offers him a humorous, almost sarcastic way of dealing with the situation. Ivan’s emotions are in turmoil. His wife has managed the two previous tasks, so he feels sure that she will manage the final one. He feels confident that his father will be pleased once again (assuming that he thinks that his father loves him and wishes him well). Yet he ostensibly realizes that his brothers and especially his sisters-in-law envy and hate him and his wife. He cannot be sure whether his father is aware of the envy and hatred, and whether he can rely on his father’s support in case of an open conflict. He also must still feel resentful toward his wife since she will not share her secret.

> *Prince Ivan went to the feast alone. And the elder brothers came with their richly attired and splendidly adorned wives. There they stood and laughed at Prince Ivan and said:*
>
> *“Why, brother, why have you come hither without your wife? You might have brought her in a piece of cloth so we could all listen to her croaking!”*

The brothers are aware that Ivan’s wife is no ordinary frog. Yet they risk their own reputation to humiliate their brother. Perhaps they hope that their mockery will win the king over to their side.

The episode at the feast replicates the baking, with the sisters-in-law foolishly copying Vasilisa’s magical tricks. The king turns angry and drives them from court with dishonor. We do not feel sorry for them

because we believe that they are receiving their just deserts. If we think about it more closely, they have been deceived by someone who is smarter and possesses magical qualities. To humiliate someone whom you know to be inferior or less fortunate is morally dubious (for instance, we disapprove of how the brothers humiliate Ivan); yet we unequivocally condemn the sisters and applaud Vasilisa's splendid performance. In fact, we do not care much about what happens to the sisters or their royal spouses. They are comfortably removed from the plot. Ivan and his bride have passed the trial and can be rewarded by inheriting the throne, which must have been the king's intention all along. We assume that the king is happy since his goal is achieved. He believes that his favorite son is happy because he has a lovely wife and has won over his arrogant brothers. What the king does not know is that neither Ivan nor Vasilisa is happy.

We might assume that Vasilisa is happy, because she has achieved the goal of winning over her sisters-in-law and securing her husband's inheritance. However, she knows something that we don't know yet: the curse is not yet lifted – three more days must pass before the enchantment is lifted. She most likely believes that Ivan is happy because he has achieved the goal of pleasing his father and winning a lovely bride into the bargain. But is Ivan happy? He has won his father's favor and rid himself of his brothers. Yet his feelings must be ambivalent. He is doubtless pleased with his father's approval, although he may feel some kind of guilt toward his brothers because he has cheated them out of their birthright. Naturally, fairy-tale heroes have no moral scruples, yet considering Ivan as a sentient human being we admit that his behavior is ethically questionable. His brothers have not harmed him beyond mocking his marriage; and if he loves them, as a good brother should, he is thoroughly upset about their disgrace. However, Ivan has more serious issues. He now knows for sure that his wife is a shape-shifter.

> *As the feast was finishing, Ivan found an excuse and ran off home. He found the frog-skin and burned it*.

It is easy to understand Ivan's actions. He knows that he has a dazzlingly beautiful and dexterous wife, and the only obstacle to his happiness is the frog-skin. Burning the skin, he believes that he will obtain happiness. Why

does our intuition unfailingly tell us that he is acting wrong? Later in the tale, the old wise man will say:

> *"You didn't put on [the skin], it wasn't for you to take off."*

Ivan suspects, as does the reader, that the frog has good grounds for not sharing her secret. Yet his desire to possess her overrules reason. This tension between desire and reason is at the core of all stories. It turns out that the tale so far has only been a prelude. Now the real trial starts, in which empathy plays a central role.

> *Vasilisa the Wise arrived, missed her frog-skin, searched and searched, and could not find it. "If you had but waited three days, I should have been yours forever more, but now farewell! Look for me beyond scores of lands and scores of seas, in the faraway country east of the sun, west of the moon, where the Magician with no heart in his body lives. When you have worn out three pairs of iron boots and eaten three iron bread loaves – only then will you find me."*
>
> *Then she turned into a white swan and flew out of the window.*

This is an emotionally charged passage. Vasilisa knows that her salvation was imminent, and that Ivan's action has ruined their chance for happiness. We assume that she loves him, otherwise why would she have made so much effort to win his affection? (Love may merely imply securing her progeny; but it is exactly how love is defined in the evolutionarily based cognitive-affective argument.) Vasilisa is distressed because the chances of happiness are diminished; she is also distressed because the man she loves did not trust her. It may seem, from Ivan's point of view, that she is punishing him, thus ruining his happiness, but apparently she has no choice.

> *Prince Ivan felt great grief.*

Grief is a social emotion caused by the object of desire temporarily or permanently lost. Grief is amplified by the realization that the lost person

was in fact the object of desire and the premise for happiness. Ivan feels profoundly guilty since he himself has brought about this disaster. However, he also feels hope. The object of desire is not irretrievably lost – she is only unimaginably far away. The recurrent formula of the Russian fairy tale – "It takes a short time to tell a tale, but a long time to do the deed" – serves to amplify the scope of Ivan's despair. If the suffering of searching for the arrow and thus the bride in the beginning of the tale was stretched over two days, this time the quest is almost infinite, measured in the inconceivable wearing out of iron boots and feeding on iron bread.

Ivan's encounter with the old wise man in the woods involves theory of mind to anticipate the old man's intentions; Ivan has to decide whether to flee, fight, or bond. Nothing in the text indicates whether the old man is benevolent, but Ivan takes a chance and greets the old man politely. It proves to be the right strategy, since the old man provides him with valuable information. In Ivan's subsequent repeated encounters with animal helpers, his empathy proves to be decisive. Starving and desperate, he prepares to kill and eat the bear, the hare, the drake, and the fish, whereupon they say

> *in human voice: "Slay me not, Prince Ivan, have mercy on me, I may perchance be of service to you somehow."*

Once again, anthropomorphization makes Ivan, and thus the reader, ascribe to the animals consciousness and emotions. The emphasis on the animals' speaking in human voice makes them Ivan's companions rather than his food. (The reverse happens later with the witch.)

> *Ivan took pity on the bear and let it go.*

Pity is a social emotion that makes us acknowledge suffering. Although the animals promise to pay Ivan back for his kindness, he does not expect any services, but spares them because of pity, admitting their equal right to live, even though he is starving himself. Ivan learns to put another person's interest before his own. Altruism is an important moral quality, which Ivan has now acquired.

The fairy-tale hero's confrontation with Baba-Yaga the witch has been much analyzed, but in terms of cognitive-affective analysis it is once again a matter of mind-reading. As with the wise old man, Ivan needs to decide whether the witch is dangerous or benevolent. The way the witch is traditionally described in the tale – bony leg, huge lip on a shelf, and nose stuck to the ceiling – evokes disgust which, as we remember, is a basic emotion prompting us to flee. The witch is effectively a rotting carcass. However, Ivan is starving and desperate for information. He makes himself overcome disgust and, although the witch threatens to eat him, which makes her inhuman, he decides to treat her as a sentient being and read her mind. What would evoke a witch's empathy? He retorts that there is no sense in eating a tired traveler; she should first give him food, drink, and a bath. After sharing a meal and offering a bath, the witch is bound by rules of hospitality.

The rest of the story develops quickly and predictably. Once the confrontation with the witch is over, she directs Ivan toward the oak tree where the Magician's heart is hidden within an egg within a duck within a hare within a chest. There is little room for emotions; quick action is required and efficiently performed by the animal helpers. There are, however, some ethical issues involved. Ivan does not stop to consider whether the Magician deserves to die. From his point of view – which we undeniably share – the Magician is evil because he once cursed his daughter and turned her into a frog, and now is holding her in captivity. The Magician is the only obstacle to Ivan's happiness and what Ivan believes to be Vasilisa's happiness, and therefore he must be eliminated. Through empathic identification, the goals of Ivan and of readers coincide, and we should feel satisfied with the outcome.

> *Vasilisa the Wise came out of the palace and said:*
>
> *"Well, Prince Ivan, since you managed to find me, I will now be yours for ever more."*

The tale offers us the conventional "lived happily ever after." We do not know what Vasilisa was doing while Ivan was searching for her. There is a version of the tale in which Vasilisa is further enchanted to forget Ivan and

is about to marry someone else – an episode frequent in the animal bride/groom tales. We do not know about her relationship with her father the Magician; we only know from the old wise man's account that Vasilisa was more clever and cunning than her father, who therefore punished her by turning her into a frog for three years. We assume that Vasilisa is unhappy to be separated from Ivan whom she loves, and therefore happy when he comes to rescue her. The only glimpse of Vasilisa's attitude toward her father is when she calls on her magical helpers to bake

"bread like such as my dear father used to eat on holy days."

Although the Magician cursed and enchanted Vasilisa, she still remembers him as her dear father. She may be distressed knowing that her beloved Ivan's happiness depends on her beloved father's death. We do not feel sorry for the Magician because, from our point of view, aligned with Vasilisa's and Ivan's, he is preventing their happiness since his goal is different from theirs (a cognitive-affective way of saying that he is evil). In fact, we do not know much about his mind, other than that he was angry with his clever daughter. This basic emotion of anger leads to the social emotion of envy, and we have already stated that envy is a negative emotion that cannot be reconciled with both parts achieving their goals. Someone has to be sacrificed. Because of our empathic identification with Ivan and partially Vasilisa, we do not feel that the Magician's death is undesirable or unfair and therefore affects the general positive outcome of the tale.

We do not care about what happened to the old king, the elder brothers and their wives, the old wise man, Baba-Yaga the witch, and the animal helpers. All these figures are instrumental to the relationship between Ivan and his bride.

Of course, while reading or listening to a tale we do not consciously perform all these cognitive-affective operations, any more than we consciously focus on narrative structures or psychoanalytical subtexts. What have I then achieved through a cognitive approach to the tale? First, I have offered an original reading that can be transposed to other tales, even though it may seem a purely academic exercise. However, as I stated initially, fairy tales have an irresistible appeal to us, and a cognitive

reading has opened a dimension that further explains this appeal. In engaging with a seemingly flat and predictable tale, our brains are stimulated to investigate cracks between the lines into which we can project our empathy, to discover the depth of human relationships and thus human emotions behind the superficial plot. With this approach, we acknowledge that flat and predictable fairy-tale characters are modeled on real people who are complex and ambivalent. We also acknowledge that although fairy tales do not directly give us access to other people's minds, they do stimulate our affective responses and make us realize how we think about other people. Thus the question implied in the title of Jack Zipes's study *Why Fairy Tales Stick*[7] can be answered as: because they tell us something important about ourselves.

Notes

1 See Reuven Tsur, *Towards a Theory of Cognitive Poetics* (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1992) and Peter Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002).

2 Patrick Colm Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also David Herman, "Cognition, Emotion, and Consciousness," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 245–59.

3 Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006); Susanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford University Press, 2008); Blakey Vermeule, *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Patrick Colm Hogan, *What Literature Teaches Us about Emotions* (Cambridge University Press, 2011); Keith Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams: The Psychology of Fiction* (London: Wiley Blackwell, 2011).

4 Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998).

5 See Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams*; Dylan Evans, *Emotions: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

6 See, for example, Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

7 Jack Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

8 The creation of Cinderella from Basile to the Brothers Grimm

Armando Maggi

Cinderella is among the most cherished figures of the Western fairy-tale canon and "no other tale has so many early, independent, and widely scattered versions."[1] We speak of a "Cinderella moment," and her straightforward parable-like move from abuse and poverty to happiness and nobility is one of those seemingly spontaneous plots that in theory have always existed, even before they were told in various versions, as the Brothers Grimm held. In the late nineteenth century, students of comparative mythology read the story of Cinderella as the image of the dawn according to Indian Vedic myths. In his 1883 *History of Folk Tales*, the scholar Angelo de Gubernatis wrote: "The dawn walks ahead of the sun, but neither she touches him nor does he touch her. The sun follows her; she dances before him, but when they seem to get closer, they depart from each other. The Vedic dawn always flees on a luminous, extremely fast chariot, which the two celestial knights, the *dioscuri*, perhaps brothers of hers, lent her."[2] Moreover, the first recorded tale with distinct Cinderella motifs comes from ninth-century China, which seems to provide evidence for the universality of this tale.[3] An aura of sacredness surrounds this tale as well as some of the other "immortal" stories present in the final edition of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* published in 1857.

When we speak about Cinderella, we usually refer to a narrative type – that is, an abstract plot that derives from the interaction between Perrault's and the Brothers Grimm's literary versions, plus Walt Disney's film adaptation, as if the Cinderella tale had finally reached its clearest and purest form thanks to the merging of an abstract literary outline with an animated film.[4] The vast majority of twentieth-century retellings of Cinderella are based on this visual-verbal narrative type, which still holds a firm grip on the contemporary imagination. Given the increasing globalization of our culture, it is fair to say that the Perrault-Grimm-Disney type has imposed itself as the "correct" version of the Cinderella tale, even though the concept of a "correct" versus an "incorrect" retelling

contradicts the fundamental tenet of folklore storytelling, which is based on a perpetual variation and transformation of all narrative formations. The basic motif itself of the Cinderella story (from rags to riches) may in fact take up radically different meanings according to the tale in which it appears.

In this regard, it is worth recalling what J. R. R. Tolkien wrote in his famous essay "On Fairy-Stories": "[Students of folk-lore] are inclined to say that any two stories that are built round the same folk-lore motive, or are made up of a generally similar combination of such motives, are 'the same stories.'…Statements of this kind may express (in undue abbreviation) some element of truth; but they are not true in a fairy-story sense…It is precisely the colouring, the atmosphere, the unclassifiable individual details of a story, and above all the general purport that informs with life the undissected bones of the plot, that really count."[5] Tolkien contests the facile identification of motif and tale, because each tale is in reality made of innumerable telling details that make it "unclassifiable." Given the centrality of the Finnish motif-based taxonomy in twentieth-century approaches to folk and fairy tales, Tolkien's statement is of immense relevance because it reminds us of the irreducible vitality of every oral and literary tale.

The first complete European version of the Cinderella story appeared in Giambattista Basile's *The Tale of Tales* (*Lo cunto de li cunti*, 1634–6), the first collection of literary fairy tales of the Western tradition.[6] Written in the Neapolitan dialect and reminiscent of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, *The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for the Little Ones* is divided into five days, each comprising ten tales. "The Cinderella Cat" is the sixth "entertainment" of the first day.[7] It tells the story of a widowed prince whose second wife is hostile to his daughter. The girl, called Zezolla, complains about her stepmother to her sewing teacher, who treats the girl with great care. Zezolla incessantly repeats: "Oh God, couldn't you be my little mommy, you who give me so many smooches and squeezes?" (84). The girl's insistence finally puts "a wasp in the teacher's ear." One day the teacher tells Zezolla that, if the girl follows her directions, she will soon become her new mother. Zezolla interrupts the teacher, who is about to give an inspired speech about the rosy future awaiting them, because the girl can't wait to hear the details of the teacher's wicked plan to get rid of

her stepmother. Since the stepmother loves to see the girl wearing rags, Zezolla should ask her for an old dress kept in a chest in the storeroom. While she searches around in the chest, the girl must slam the lid on her stepmother's head and break her neck. Zezolla follows her teacher's suggestions and, after killing her stepmother, convinces her father to marry the cunning teacher, who turns out to be even more abusive than the first stepmother.

It is worth remarking that the first Cinderella of the Western tradition, if we believe that Zezolla identifies with the Cinderella type known through the Grimms, uses her well-known abject appearance to get rid of the woman who has forced her into that pitiful role. The girl kills the stepmother while they are looking for a worn-out dress in a chest. Zezolla's teacher indeed stresses that the evil woman "likes to see you all patched up in rags." The Neapolitan girl not only defies her passive condition, which a post-Grimm view of Cinderella considers the trademark of her tale, she also commits a heinous crime for which she would deserve some harsh punishment, if we accept the idea that all fairy tales implicitly convey a moral message. But morality doesn't seem a major concern in *The Tale of Tales*. Although relevant scholarship has shown that deceit, dishonesty, and even murder are key elements of folk and fairy tales, a conventional view of this genre still holds onto the belief that a moral teaching is the Holy Grail of folk and fairy tales, even when, as in the case of Perrault, a clear disconnect is detectable between some of his tales and the moral commentaries in verses that follow them.

The Brothers Grimm were aware of the problematic nature of Basile's "The Cinderella Cat," as we can infer from their summary of this Neapolitan tale. In 1822, the Grimms published abridged versions in German of all fifty stories included in Basile's collection as an appendix to the second edition of their collection (1819). Jacob authored thirty-eight of these summaries. Wilhelm edited his brother's texts and worked on the remaining twelve Neapolitan tales.[8] After Felix Liebrecht published the first complete German translation of the Italian volume in 1846, the Grimms removed their adaptations of the Neapolitan stories from all subsequent editions of their seminal collection. The Grimms' editorial work on Basile is more complex than might appear at first glance. It is impossible to know Basile's work by reading the Grimms' adaptations,

because the two German scholars did not limit themselves to outlining the Italian tales. They often edited out passages, modified endings, rewrote dialogue, and frequently added small but significant details to bring the seventeenth-century Italian stories closer to their view of a fairy tale.

In their 1822 appendix, the Grimms rewrote the beginning of "The Cinderella Cat" as follows: "A widower has a daughter, whom he loves dearly, and also a special governess. When he remarries, the girl complains to the governess about her stepmother who treats her harshly. 'Well, if I were your mother, I would love you like the apple of my eye.' 'Oh, please tell me what I should do.'"[9] By rewriting the dialogue between Zezolla and her teacher, the German scholars succeed in presenting the girl as a naïve character who will find in nature her provident supporter. They also shift the responsibility for the stepmother's murder from the girl to her teacher (in Basile, it is the girl who persuades the teacher to murder the stepmother).

Like Basile's "Cinderella Cat," Perrault's version, which came out in 1697 in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*, ignores the girl's mother and opens with a marked emphasis on the moral drama that will soon unfold: "Once upon a time there was a gentleman who took the haughtiest and proudest woman in the world for his second wife."[10] Perrault's elaboration results from a distinct ideology and produces a tale that is only apparently close to the Grimms'. The French tale is particularly important because apart from Perrault's seminal rewriting of the Cinderella motif, most Cinderella tales were first collected in the nineteenth century, whose two initial decades saw a series of German tales that didn't fully develop the famous fairy tale and instead rehearsed a French-influenced prototype.[11] The contrast between Perrault's and the Grimms' Cinderella tale couldn't be starker. Echoing Basile's *The Tale of Tales*, the French tale begins with the evil second wife and makes no allusion to the deceased spouse, whereas the German story opens with the sentimental image of the pious mother who delivers a touching speech before passing away. The figures of the two opposite women respond to two distinct ideological goals. Perrault de-emphasizes the role of nature as the embodiment of a divine justice that guides the creation with an iron fist, according to a Protestant sensibility (the two white doves cold-bloodedly blind the two haughty sisters because they fall outside the realm of God's grace), and presents an

all-too-human clash between a moral female behavior, which sees in meekness the supreme expression of a woman's identity, and an immoral one, based on the (unbecoming) assumption that a woman can be an active agent in society.

We could object that in Perrault's tale the godmother is a powerful and decisive woman, who plays a central role in the girl's destiny. It is important to note, however, two problematic aspects of this female figure. First, she is a good witch who knows the secrets of magic. Her intervention is a clear deformation in the natural order of things, as magic is meant to be. The godmother turns a pumpkin into a golden coach and mice into horses. Furthermore, the compassionate lady must compel nature to collaborate in her plan to send the weeping girl to the party. Whereas innumerable ants sort out the scattered legumes in the first trial imposed by Venus on Psyche in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* and gentle white doves perform the same task for the Grimms' Cinderella, Perrault's godmother must check the mousetrap to see if it contains any mice (451). Second, the lady's magical powers are at the service of someone else, as if she weren't allowed to use them for herself. She experiences transformation by proxy. Equally remarkable is the ending of the French tale. The two French sisters are not cursed by a Dantean *contrapasso*, according to which the souls in hell suffer a punishment resembling their sin or contrasting to it (the German stepsisters are blind to Cinderella's plight and thus blinded by the white doves); in Perrault they "recognized her as the beautiful person they had seen at the ball. They threw themselves at her feet begging her pardon," and their meek sister can't help but forgive them (453).

The differences between the two famous French and German versions of Cinderella are significant. One essential contrast is the role of religion. Although the Grimms aimed to emphasize the Christian undertone of their tales, especially in their final versions, the spiritual background of their storytelling is primarily based on a mixture of animism and Christianity.[12] As Saint Augustine underscores in *On the Care to Be Given to the Dead*, Christian theology firmly states that death severs every connection between the living and the deceased.[13] The deeply ill but concerned mother in the opening lines of the last version of the Grimms' Cinderella is a character missing from Basile's "Cinderella Cat," which instead

presents two mean-spirited stepmothers. The absence of a caring mother reflects a seventeenth-century poetics according to which a hostile and blind fate rules over the world.[14] Writing during the height of German Romanticism, the Grimms grant a pivotal role to the spirit of the girl's deceased mother, who comes to be identified with the benevolence of nature, which cannot help but rescue the indigent and pious girl. The Grimms open their version with the bedridden mother who calls her daughter and reassures her of protection even after her death, but only if the girl behaves according to basic Christian precepts. It would be fair to state that, if we compare the Grimms' version with Basile's and Perrault's earlier retellings, we cannot help but see the dead mother as the main agent of the Grimms' tale. The expression "the mother's grave" recurs throughout the German tale as a leitmotif, because most of its magical events take place at that site. The German tale opens with the sentence: "The wife of a rich man fell ill one day," and proceeds to narrate a transformation that the dying mother had already foreseen. The Grimms' Cinderella is in essence a girl whose destiny is to turn into the mother who passes away at the beginning of the tale. She is presented as a wealthy and religious woman who instructs her daughter to follow in her footsteps and reassures her that she will support her in the difficult journey ahead.

In the first version of the Grimms' tale (1812), the mother's importance is even more explicit. A brief comparison between the 1812 (first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*), 1819 (second edition), and 1857 (final edition) versions of the maternal speech is revealing. In 1812, the dying mother summons her daughter and says: "Dear child, I must leave you, but when I am in Heaven, I shall watch over you; plant a small tree on my grave and when you wish something, shake it and you shall have it, and when you are in distress, I shall send you help; just remain pious and good."[15] In 1819, the Grimms edit the lady's brief monologue as follows: "Remain pious and good, so that our dear Lord shall always stand by you and I shall watch over you from Heaven and care for you."[16] Finally, in the 1857 edition we read: "Dear child, if you are good and say your prayers faithfully, our dear Lord will always help you, and I shall look down from heaven and always be with you."[17] The 1812 version reveals the absolutely pivotal role that the mother will play in her daughter's transformation. It is in this early draft that the Grimms' intention is most evident. The mother

makes her mutation into a plant explicit, given that the plant will feed on the soil in which she is buried. She, the mother, will grant whatever her daughter needs. The mother's warning about the importance of piety appears at the very end of her speech and does not seem to be indispensable for the girl's wellbeing. The fundamental change from the 1812 edition to the 1819 and 1857 ones gives the ill mother a more mysterious, less explicit role. The act of planting a tree on her grave becomes an action that nature itself inspires in the young girl, whose piety is spelled out in the 1857 version (she must pray regularly and sincerely). In the progressive editing of the opening lines of their Cinderella tale, the Grimms both weaken and reinforce the figure of the mother. Although in the 1812 version she is the unquestionable agent of her daughter's salvation and thus is presented as a powerful character, in the two later versions the mother transfers her power to God and also merges with the all-powerful energy of nature. As a woman, she is weak, but in the act of dissolving into nature she comes to identify with (a Christian) destiny.

Agency is a crucial problem in the Cinderella tale because the young girl's responsibility in her own transformation is questionable, and varies considerably from version to version. The concept itself of the so-called "Cinderella moment" is moot. If we bear in mind Tolkien's fundamental distinction between a motif and a tale, we must acknowledge that the opening and the unfolding of the various "Cinderellas" in fact announce significantly different tales and "each version should stand and be considered on its own, as well as for its relation to the 'cycle.'"[18] In the Grimms' seminal retelling, which, along with Perrault's version, influenced innumerable oral and literary versions, the main active move on Cinderella's part is to ask her father for the branch from a hazel bush, plant it on her mother's grave, and cry tears to water it. In Basile's version we find a similar scene, but one that grants the young girl a much stronger and more decisive character. When her father leaves on a business trip, Zezolla (the Cinderella Cat) asks him to give her regards to "the dove of the fairies" on the island of Sardinia, as a bird had suggested to her at her second stepmother's wedding (85). In the original Italian tale, Zezolla voices a menacing warning to her father: "If you forget, may you be unable to go forward or backward. Keep in mind what I say." Her father forgets about his daughter's request and his ship can't move from the port. When he finally remembers and travels to the cave of the fairies, a

beautiful lady comes out of the grotto, thanks him for his daughter's kindness, and gives him four gifts for her: a date tree, a hoe, a golden pail, and a silk cloth. Instead of watering the branch planted in the ground next to her mother's grave with her tears as we read in the Grimms, the Neapolitan girl skillfully cultivates the date tree with the instruments received from the benevolent fairy. She sheds no tears.

In their adaptation of Basile's tale, the Grimms toned down Zezolla's forceful character and rewrote the father-daughter dialogue as follows: "He also asks Ash Kitten what she desires. She answers that he should greet the fairy's bird and ask it to send her something. 'But, please, do not forget,' she adds" (290). By significantly softening the girl's words, the Grimms make her resemble their own Cinderella, whose main activity is to cry her eyes out as if tears were the only appropriate response to the tragedy that has befallen her.

In the German tale, the stepmother twice subjects the girl to a seemingly meaningless trial. Echoing the first task that Venus imposes on Psyche in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*, the wicked stepmother demands that Cinderella repeat the same task on two distinct occasions: "If you can pick out two bowls of lentils from the ashes in the next hour, then you can go" to the party.[19] Given that the stepmother disregards her promise even though two white doves followed by innumerable other kind birds take care of this apparently impossible task, we could conclude that this episode is a superfluous digression, which is *de facto* deleted from the popular Cinderella "type" resulting from the mingling of the Disney and Grimms retellings. In her important study of the Cinderella cycle, Anna Birgitta Rooth contends that this echo of the Psyche tale "appears in the Near Eastern, Eastern and Northern European traditions, but does not occur in the Italian and Iberian traditions"; its function is "to prevent the girl from going to the feast."[20] Thus, in Rooth's view it can be replaced by any other motif with a similar function. Rooth's claim is a cogent example of the widespread identification between type and actual tale. The international typology introduced by the Finnish school, which pigeonholes the infinite oral tales within well-defined categories, significantly de-emphasizes the uniqueness of any given tale.[21] The motif reminiscent of Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* in reality indicates a process of differentiation, distinction, and separation (the girl has to sort out different

kinds of legumes), and thus describes the heroine's journey toward adulthood.[22] However, when applied to the specific Grimms' tale, it acquires additional narrative meanings. If we keep in mind that the Grimms posit a crucial identification between the dead mother and nature, we can't help but see the two white doves as the symbol of that natural and divine justice that rewards the girl. Finally embodying her deceased mother, the girl harshly punishes the two insensitive stepsisters. Three is a magical number in the fairy-tale genre, and the two doves perform three similar actions: they peck the lentils out of the ashes twice and finally peck the stepsisters' eyes at the end of the tale. As Psyche is powerless without the spontaneous interventions of nature and Cupid, so the Grimms' Cinderella becomes the passive spectator of her own salvation, written in the natural law of divine justice.

Through a brief analysis of the first three major literary tales revolving around a Cinderella-like figure we have noticed that the narrative context and the ideological background of each tale brings to the fore significantly different connotations to the point of undermining the reassuring view of an "eternal" and immutable Cinderella whose parable is only marginally modified by the historical conditions in which a given tale arises. Doubting the intrinsic constituent of Cinderella could be seen as an affront to a well-established critical tradition. The renowned Freudian folklorist Alan Dundes offers a clear summary of our received idea of Cinderella. In *Folklore Matters* he contends that in a fairy tale "self-identity is tied to group recognition of identity. Cinderella, the household drudge who sits, dirty and disfigured, by the hearth, is the same person as the dazzlingly beautiful belle of the ball, but it is only when the outside world realizes this fact that the tale's dénouement, her happy marriage, can be achieved."[23] But let us take, for example, the Milanese "Cinderella" ("Cenerentola"), a post-Grimms oral version of the tale, which we find in *Milanese Tales* (*La novellaja milanesa*, 1872), an anthology of oral tales collected by the influential Italian scholar and writer Vittorio Imbriani (1840–86), whose novellas and short stories were deeply influenced by the work of Clemens Brentano (1778–1842). Brentano played a fundamental role in the development of the Grimms' interest in folk narratives.

The late nineteenth-century Milanese story – which Imbriani transcribed short-hand with no editorial touch-up, in direct contrast with the Grimms'

approach – opens with a father who must leave his three daughters to go on a business trip. Reminiscent of Basile's "Cinderella Cat" but also of Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont's "Beauty and the Beast," the father asks the three girls to choose a gift they would like to receive on his return. Whereas the first two daughters desire fancy clothes, the youngest one, called Cinderella "because she was always by the fire," only asks for a bird.[24] When he returns, the father (who works for the local court) and his three daughters receive an invitation from the king to attend his three royal balls. Even though her sisters insist that she attend the party, Cinderella refuses to go with her family: "Shut up!…I am happy this way" ("Chetatevi!…Io son contenta così"). Even though Cinderella doesn't have the appropriate attire, her two older sisters are convinced that together they can "come up with something" for her to wear (152). Their father cuts in and tells his two daughters to leave Cinderella alone; she is free not to go to the party. But as soon as they are gone, Cinderella calls to the bird: "Make me more beautiful than I am!" When she arrives at the king's palace her beauty is "blinding." After dancing with the awestruck king, the girl becomes tired and decides to go back home. She jumps in her coach and throws money to the king's servants who are following her to find out where she lives. She rushes up the stairs of her father's palace and tells the bird: "Make me uglier than I am!"

The Milanese Cinderella does not endure humiliation and abuse because of her evil sisters, who instead would like her to go with them to the ball. This Milanese girl knows that to make a lasting impression a lady is supposed to arrive at a party as late as possible and alone. Cinderella makes her entrance when the other guests are already enjoying the company of the royal family. She is the only one with the gall to arrive late at the king's party! If the Cinderella motif is inextricably linked to the rags-to-riches idea, how do we interpret this tale? Or should we redefine the received concept of Cinderella? Instead of a rags-to-riches character should we speak of a girl who, unbeknownst to her father and sisters, succeeds in becoming a king's wife? This Italian tale is only one of countless examples of an oral story in which a set of clearly recognizable motifs fails to create a conventional narrative structure. In twentieth-century Western culture, innumerable literary and visual interpretations strove to subvert the problematic ideological message conveyed by the handful of literary tales that had acquired the status of "classical"

narratives – that is, immutable, pure, and unchangeable stories. Twentieth-century approaches to fairy tales were essentially parodic. "Parody," Simon Dentith points out, "includes any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice."[25] It is essential to bear in mind, however, that parody has also the paradoxical effect of reinforcing the power of the referential "cultural production" that it intends to attack. In other words, all modern parodies of Cinderella are based on the conscious or unconscious premise that the Cinderella type as we know it deserves its position of superiority. The Milanese oral version transcribed by Imbriani is not a self-conscious and polemical retelling; it plays with well-known motifs (the two older sisters versus the youngest sibling; the magical bird; the royal ball; the rushed disappearance; the lost shoe) without assembling them in the order and with the meaning we have come to expect.

According to our present cultural expectations, Imbriani's tale is "incorrect" also because it doesn't transmit a clear moral message. As Louis Vax reminds us, "fairy tale" does not necessarily equal "moral tale."[26] Although several well-known oral and literary tales celebrate ingenuity and slyness rather than piety and honesty, morality has been widely accepted as a fundamental goal of the fairy-tale genre. Contrary to this received idea, cunning is the central aspect of the Milanese oral tale, in which Cinderella doesn't deserve to be rewarded for moral reasons because nobody has abused her.

To a significant extent, our contemporary clinging to "classical" tales is also the product of a cultural conformity that struggles to free itself from a past narrative that doesn't concern us any longer. In her introduction to *The Fairies Return, or New Tales for Old* (first edition 1934), Maria Tatar rightly emphasizes that "both satire and fairy tale are driven by a lack, by a sense that something vital is missing."[27] Our parodic retellings (in films, graphic novels, children's books, erotica, etc.) do not help us move beyond the fossilized classics of nineteenth-century Western Europe; they reinforce their "inevitability." What is missing from parody and fairy tale today is that sense of unbridled wonder that used to be associated with this oral and literary genre. "Fairy tale," the linguist Claudio Marazzini rightly contends, "is not as vital as it used to be in an archaic society dominated by oral transmission."[28] In his view, "when its audience became limited to

children the decadence of this genre began."[29] We can detect a cause-effect connection between fairy tales exclusively as children's literature and its present conventionality, which includes the seemingly innovative retellings that "subvert," "undermine," or "question," as critics like to say, the classical fairy tales. Cinderella is probably, along with Sleeping Beauty, the highest expression of this repetitious format.

Two additional points must be borne in mind. First, the fact that a tale resembling the Cinderella transmitted by Perrault and the Grimms existed in ninth-century China and in Basile's *The Tale of Tales* does not necessarily mean that this tale (or better yet, "type") had the same cultural power that our modern conventional Cinderella has possessed for the last few centuries, especially starting from the nineteenth century. Nothing allows us to think that Basile's "The Cinderella Cat" enjoyed a prominent status, since this seminal collection abounds with unforgettable tales in which young girls are exactly the opposite of the Grimms' female meek prototype. Basile's heroines are often feisty and astute, and in most tales they do not need a prince to help them out of a difficult situation. In the tale "The Three Crowns," for instance, a young princess wakes up three sleeping beauties whose mother had magically put them to sleep to protect them from a grim future, unless a princess (not a prince) would come and wake them up.

Second, in analyzing any oral or literary tale, we should pay close attention to all those elements that we have erroneously learned to see as secondary and disposable. In other words, contemporary readers of folk and fairy tales find in ancient versions what they wish to find – that is, the confirmation that "our" Cinderella is an improved version of the ninth-century Chinese or seventeenth-century Neapolitan one – and discard the "dross" of the tale. The celebrated Chinese tale (titled "Yeh-hsien") seems at once astonishingly similar to and irremediably distinct from the modern Perrault-Grimm-Disney outline.

A brief summary will be helpful. The Chinese tale opens as follows: "Among the people of the south there is a tradition that before the Ch'in and Han dynasties there was a cave-master called Wu. The aborigines called the place the Wu cave. He married two wives. One wife died."[30] When her husband passes away, the second wife begins to mistreat the stepdaughter Yeh-hsien. One of the tasks she imposes on the good girl is to

draw water from deep pools. “She once got a fish two inches long,” the tale goes on, and she put it into a bowl, but it grew so big that no bowl could contain it. She thus “threw it into the back pond” and fed it regularly. Dressed as her daughter, the stepmother goes to the pond, calls the fish up, stabs it with a knife, and cooks it. When she realizes what has happened, the girl sobs desperately, but a man descending from the sky tells her that her stepmother has hidden the fish’s bones under a dunghill. If she hides them in her room and prays to them, all her wishes will be granted. Yeh-hsien receives pearls, food, and elegant dresses. For the traditional cave festival, after her stepmother and stepsister leave, the girl wears “a cloak of stuff spun from kingfisher feathers and shoes of gold” (19). When her stepsister recognizes her, she runs away but loses one of her golden shoes, which one of the cave people picks up and then sells in the kingdom of T’o-han, an island close to the cave. The ruler of this realm finally gets hold of the precious shoe and decides to find its original owner. When the young girl tries it on, it becomes evident that the shoe belongs to her. The ruler marries her and also gets the magical fish’s bones. Soon afterwards, “flying stones” hit and kill the stepmother and stepsister, and the cave people feel so sorry for them that they bury them “in a stone-pit, which was called the Tomb of the Distressed Women. The men of the cave made mating-offerings there; any girl they prayed for there, they got” (20). The king who had married Yeh-hsien is very greedy and demands innumerable gifts from the fish’s bones. “Next year, there was no response, so the king buried the fish-bones on the sea-shores,” and he marks the place with gold. During a mutiny, some soldiers open the hiding place and one night they (the bones) were “washed away by the tide.”

Readers of the Cinderella “cycle” identify this tale as the original Cinderella story. Is this really the case? We might claim that the main focus of the tale is less the good girl than the magical fish, another well-known figure of Western folk and fairy tales. Remember, for example, the Brothers Grimm’s “The Fisherman and His Wife,” which tells the story of a poor fisherman who one day pulls up a magical flounder. Similar to what we read in the ancient Chinese tale, the fisherman’s greedy wife abuses the fish’s generosity. In the Chinese story, the fish appears in conjunction with the girl’s first deed in the tale (she must fetch water from a deep pool) and whose disappearance marks the ending of the tale. The tale opens with a

magical appearance and closes with its exhaustion due to the king's greed. A magical animal is present in Basile's and the Grimms' tales as well, but in this ancient Chinese tale the animal stands at the very center of the story. It is also worth remarking on the significant role of the stepmother and stepsister, whose grave becomes a holy place of pilgrimage. The Chinese girl's happy ending doesn't coincide with the ending of the tale. Three major transformations take place, and Yeh-hsien's is only the first, and not even the most spectacular one. The stepmother and stepsister, whose sudden death is mourned by the cave people, rest forever in the Tomb of the Distressed Women, in order to commemorate their own plight in this tale. The last transformation concerns the fish's bones, which first reveal the girl's husband's lack of modesty (he is not the Prince Charming of our tradition) and then dissolve into the sea, the fish's original element.

According to Rooth's analysis of the Cinderella cycle, this famous narrative type can be divided into two main kinds: Type A revolves around an evil stepmother; Type B concerns a father's incestuous desire for his daughter. An additional third type, C, regards a male Cinderella tormented by a wicked stepmother, even though this third variation is primarily present in the Balkan, Irish, and Scandinavian traditions.[31] One cannot help but note, however, that with the end of oral transmission of magic tales the above subdivision has acquired a distinctly archaeological flavor. Contemporary visual and literary retellings of Cinderella (especially film and television versions) appear as contrived and forced attempts to rejuvenate a literary fossil.[32] The extremely rare cases of a successful "restoration" are works that either leave the referential model behind as a fading cultural memory or transform it from within.

I will limit myself to two opposite, but in my view equally masterful, manipulations of the Cinderella tale. In "Tale of the Shoe," the first story of *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins* (1997), Emma Donoghue presents a Cinderella who has internalized the abusive setting of the classical tale, which becomes a faint literary echo in the protagonist's and the reader's mind. The tale opens as follows: "Until she came it was all cold. Ever since my mother died the feather bed felt hard as a stone floor…I scrubbed and swept because there was nothing else to do… Nobody made me do the things I did, nobody scolded me, nobody punished me, but me. The shrill voices were all inside."[33] Reminiscent of

Anne Sexton's seminal poetic rewritings in *Transformations* (1971), the main character of Donoghue's tale insists that "nobody" (no stepmother) abused her; her despondent condition derived from her mourning her mother's death. The nagging voices in the traditional tale (the stepmother and stepsisters), the girl repeats, "were all inside." It is also relevant to note that the girl narrates her own story in the past tense, making its events even more remote. No names are given, and the figure of the godmother from Perrault's version is "the stranger" who one day appears behind the protagonist and triggers in her a feeling of magical renewal: "How can I begin to describe the transformations?" the girl asks (3). The mysterious woman, who was old enough to be the girl's mother and had indeed known her, did have magical powers, but her magic was the all-too-human love feeling that she triggered in the girl.

In his theatrical work *La gatta cenerentola* (*The Cinderella Cat*, 1976), the composer and ethnomusicologist Roberto De Simone offers a magnificent reinterpretation of Basile's tale not by subverting his source, but rather by turning the well-known story into a large fresco of seventeenth-century Neapolitan culture. An immense success in Italy, this multifaceted work in Neapolitan dialect (a mélange of melodrama, *opera buffa*, and seventeenth-century Neapolitan popular songs) transforms the city of Naples into the real protagonist of its *mise-en-scène*. "When I started thinking about *The Cinderella Cat*," De Simone writes, "I immediately thought of a melodrama: a new and ancient melodrama as new and ancient are fairy tales in the moment we narrate them."[34] De Simone's work is a masterpiece of cultural archaeology. Basile's fairies become the so-called "munacielli," familiar spirits typical of Neapolitan folklore; Catholicism converses with local superstitious beliefs; the seventeenth-century city of Naples is dominated by the Spanish army; and Cinderella ("grey like a cat") first appears holding a broom and a rag in a large and forlorn room, resentfully singing: "Some are born naked and some with a shirt / I was born naked and with nothing" (Act 1, page 15). No teacher suggests that she kill her manipulative stepmother; the girl, living in a hostile and miserable time, willfully tries and fails to murder her.

To speak about Cinderella in the first decades of the new millennium demands that we face a still uncharted field of narrative restlessness and

cultural conformity. Contemporary popular culture presents a variety of trite and unchallenging approaches to the "sacred" Perrault-Grimm-Disney tale. Along with film adaptations that transfer the clichéd narrative skeleton to contemporary times (for instance, *Pretty Woman*, *Maid in Manhattan*, or *Princess Diaries*), this classical tale is also dissected into single tropes, such as the lost shoe or the figure of the benign godmother, as if the Cinderella narrative mechanism had ceased to work and only single pieces of it could still be put to use. These loose tropes have a pervasive presence in current popular culture, from television programs (from *Sex and the City* to *American Idol*) to sporting events, wherever a reference to the Cinderella type is applicable.

A third technique is to compose new stories set in contemporary times (and in particular, contemporary America) in which innumerable well-known characters of classical fairy tales interact with each other. See, for example, the graphic novel *Fables*, published in several installments, that recounts the vicissitudes of Snow White, Prince Charming, Beauty and the Beast, Pinocchio, and Cinderella, among many others, who live incognito in "Fabletown," a secret community in New York City. They have become an endangered species that strives to protect itself from humans and mysterious forces of evil. This narrative strategy is reminiscent of the postclassical Alexandrian culture, which tried to achieve some form of originality by mixing up previous illustrious texts and genres. Inspired by the amusing young-adult books *The Sisters Grimm*, the dull television series *Once Upon a Time* also revolves around a small town community. The inhabitants of this isolated place are characters from famous fairy tales, including Cinderella. Unaware of their real identities, they cannot leave the small town because of a spell cast by the evil queen from the Snow White tale. We could interpret this narrative device (an enclosed space that keeps Cinderella and other major fairy-tale figures distant from the rest of the world) as the symbolic representation of a transitional time, in which old and formulaic narratives resist their inevitable transformation.

Notes

1 Archer Taylor, "The Study of the Cinderella Cycle," in Alan Dundes, ed., *Cinderella: A Folklore Casebook* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), 115–28: 117.

2 Angelo de Gubernatis, *Storia delle novelline popolari* (Milan: Hoepli, 1883), 13.

3 See Neil Philip, *The Cinderella Story* (New York: Penguin Folklore Library, 1989), 17–18.

4 Jack Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films* (New York: Routledge, 2011), Kindle edition, location 700: "Walt Disney…became king of the fairy-tale film in the twentieth century, and though dead, his ghost still sits on the throne and rules the realm."

5 J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), 33–90: 45–6.

6 For a brief introduction to Basile, see Nancy Canepa, "Basile, Giambattista (1575–1632)," in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*, vol. I, ed. Donald Haase (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 99–101.

7 Giambattista Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunte*, ed. Michele Rak (Milan: Garzanti, 1998), 124–37. I quote from the most recent English translation: Giambattista Basile, *The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for the Little Ones*, trans. Nancy Canepa (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), 83–9. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

8 Heinz Rölleke, *Die Märchen der Brüder Grimm: Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2004), 14–15.

9 "Aschenkätzchen," in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen: Gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm. Dritter Band* (Berlin: Reimer, 1822), 289–92: 289. Unless

otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

10 Charles Perrault, “Cinderella; or, the Glass Slipper,” in *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 449–54: 449. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

11 Hans-Jörg Uther, “Aschenputtel,” in *Handbuch zu den “Kinder- und Haus-märchen” der Brüder Grimm* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 50–5: 50–1.

12 On Cinderella’s moral and possibly religious message, see Wilhelm Solms, *Die Moral von Grimms Märchen* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1999), 9–17 and 175–92. In particular, Solms holds that the punishment of the two wicked sisters reflects a “naïve morality” rather than an actual Christian mindset (10). As far as the overall message of the Grimms’ book, Solms distinguishes among several different categories of religiosity (tales in which God is invoked; tales in which God is treated as example of the fairy tale’s morality; tales with an explicitly Christian content; tales with a shamanic flavor; etc.). See also Heinz Rölleke, “Das Bild Gottes in den Märchen der Brüder Grimm,” in *Die Märchen der Brüder Grimm: Quellen und Studien* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2004), 184–95. In *The Owl, the Raven, and the Dove* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), G. Ronald Murphy, S. J., contends that Wilhelm Grimm was not just a “moralizing type”; he was more “a private, mystic soul” (14).

13 Saint Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, in *Patrologia latina*, vol. XL (Paris: Garnier, 1887), 591–610. Cf. my *In the Company of Demons* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 97.

14 Cf. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama* (New York: Verso, 1994), 132.

15 “Aschenputtel” (1812–15), in *Die ursprünglichen Märchen der Brüder Grimm*, ed. Kurt Derungs (Bern: Edition amalia, 1999), 79–85: 79–80.

16 "Aschenputtel" (1819), in *Die wahren Märchen der Brüder Grimm*, ed. Heinz Rölleke (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2003), 119–26: 119.

17 "Cinderella," in *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, ed. Maria Tatar (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 115–27: 115–16.

18 Philip, *The Cinderella Story*, 4.

19 "Cinderella," in *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, 121. Cf. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, vol. I, ed. Arthur Hanson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), book 6, 329.

20 Anna Birgitta Rooth, *The Cinderella Cycle* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1951), 176.

21 Cf. Nicole Belmont, *Mythe, conte et enfance* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), 219.

22 *Ibid*., 235–6.

23 Alan Dundes, *Folklore Matters* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 22.

24 Vittorio Imbriani, "Cenerentola," in *La novellaja milanesa: Ristampa accresciuta di molte novelle inedite, di numerosi riscontri e di note e della Novellaja Fiorentina* (Livorno: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1976; facsimile of 1877 edition), 151–7: 151.

25 Simon Dentith, *Parody* (New York: Routledge, 2000), Kindle edition, location 261.

26 Louis Vax, "Les Genres de la littérature orale," in *Formes du récit dans la première moitié du XIXe siècle. Grimm-Brentano-La Motte Fouqué* (Paris: Éditions du temps, 2001), 184–222: 205.

27 Maria Tatar, “Introduction,” in *The Fairies Return, or New Tales for Old*, comp. Peter Davies (Princeton University Press, 2012), 1–36: 6.

28 Claudio Marazzini, *Le fiabe* (Rome: Carocci, 2004), 27.

29 *Ibid*.

30 Philip, “Yeh-hsien,” in *The Cinderella Story*, 18–20: 18. Philip reprints the translation present in Arthur Waley, “The Chinese Cinderella Story,” *Folk-Lore* 58 (London: The Folklore Society, 1947), 226–38. For a basic introduction to its author, see pages 226–7. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

31 Rooth, *The Cinderella Cycle*, 134–5.

32 Cf. Carolina Fernández-Rodríguez, “Cinderella Films,” in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*, vol. I, 205–9.

33 Emma Donoghue, “Tale of the Shoe,” in *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins* (New York: HarperTeen, 1999), 1–2. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

34 Roberto De Simone, “Presentazione 1976,” in *La gatta cenerentola* (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), v–vii: v. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

9 The soul music of “The Juniper Tree”

Stephen Benson

> Words were not left to hum the spell.
> (John Clare, “The Progress of Rhyme”)

A bird is singing. The song of the bird lies at the heart of “The Juniper Tree,” tale number 47 in the Grimms’ *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. A little girl, Marleen, has gathered the bones of her murdered and cannibalized stepbrother and placed them under a juniper tree. The tree begins to stir: “At the same time there rose a kind of mist from the tree, and deep in the mist there burned a fire, and out of the fire there flew such a beautiful bird which sang so splendidly and flew high up into the air.”[1] The juniper tree, site of this miraculous birth, is already a site of death, the boy’s mother having been buried beneath its branches according to her wishes, following the birth of her only son.

So the bird is a boy, a boy reincarnated as a bird-boy. As we read or listen to the tale we make a connection between the bones of the boy and the birth of the bird. Why do we make such a connection? Because one thing follows another here according to the inexorable unfolding of the fairy tale. We understand the bird to be the boy, or the incarnated spirit of the boy, and the story ends – naturally enough for such a story – with his rebirth in human form. We understand the bird to be the boy because of the kind of story we are in, and because the bird-boy sings the sorry song of himself, the song of his fate:

> It was my mother who butchered me,
> It was my father who ate me,
> My sister, little Marleen,
> Found all my little bones,
> Bound them in a silken cloth,
> And laid them under the juniper tree.
> Peewit, peewit, what a beautiful bird am I!
>
> (144–5)

At the heart of “The Juniper Tree” lies this song of the bird-boy, a song repeated verbatim no fewer than eight times. Eight times we hear the fairy-tale refrain, a refrain in the sense of *refringere*, a repeat that is also a breaking off, the interruption of a sequence.[2] The song sounds as counterpoint to the story; or to borrow Robert Coover’s program-cum-description, the song is descant to the tale’s pricksong.[3] And yet the song *is* the story, appearing as it does to sound the bare bones of the matter. The bones make a bird and the bird makes a song. The bird-boy sings of the events that have befallen him, for that is what sounds in the song: a series of events. The song is a recitation of, lament for, and memorial to the events of the tale up to the birth of the bird that sings of them as his own. Events such as these are what make fairy tales tick: they are fairy tales’ natural ingredients, however improbable and outlandish, however unnatural. And yet the arrangement of such events in the course of a tale makes of them something more than – something other than – they are each on their own. However gratuitously meaningless as discrete statements, their arrangement in the form of a tale transforms them into something meaningful, or at least grants them the kind of meaning we expect when we think of storytelling.

So then is the birdsong a story, perhaps a ballad such as we might think to find nestled in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805–8), the volume of German folk songs that played such an important role in the genesis of the Grimms’ collection? Does the bird-boy sing the first half of a fairy tale? Were we to consult E. M. Forster, the novelist would answer in the negative, for the words of the song fail to fulfill the basic criterion for a minimal plot. There is storied sequence, all “unlovely and dull,” as in Forster’s own folkloric example: “The king died and then the queen died.”[4] But there is not the “much higher aspect,” namely “the sense of causality” such as appears with a small addition: “The king died and then the queen died of grief.”[5] There is no causal sense in the first statement beyond the fallacious logic of *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (after this, therefore because of this); and the same could be said of the song of the bird-boy in “The Juniper Tree.” Without the framing tale the song might well be taken to suggest a trio in cahoots against a son and brother, or at least a mother and father singing from the same hymn sheet.

For an example of a conventionally plotted birdsong we need look no further than the first English translation of the Grimms' collection, Edgar Taylor's *German Popular Stories*, published in 1823. "The Juniper Tree" appears as the final tale in the second volume:

> My mother slew her little son;
> My father thought me lost and gone:
> But pretty Margery pitied me,
> And laid me under the juniper tree;
> And now I rove so merrily,
> As over the hills and dales I fly:
> O what a fine bird am I![6]

While Taylor's notes include a comparatively straight translation of the song as it appears in his source, his primary translation is something far richer, a fleshed-out version of the Grimms' bare bones. As Jennifer Schacker writes, "attention has shifted" in Taylor's treatment, "away from criminal acts (murder, cannibalism) and corporeal imagery (flesh which is eaten, the bones which remain)," with the result that the song is rendered "a less horrific account of events."[7] But then the Grimms' bird does not sing an account, if ever singing can be said straightforwardly to offer such a thing as an account. Instead, he memorializes in song the facts of what has happened, creating a sung recitation, a plaint. The addition of a gentle nudge of causal explanation alters the tone of the song; not because it softens the picture but because it provides the comfort of story, which is to say the comfort of a very familiar form of reasoning. Compare the most prestigious sounding of the song of "The Juniper Tree," towards the end of Part I of Goethe's *Faust*, where an imprisoned Gretchen sings to herself a version of the refrain. The song of course carries multiple resonances when performed at this moment in the drama, but most striking for our purposes is the simple fact that the version is marked by the absence of any explanatory narrative logic such as we find in Taylor:

> Who killed me dead?
> My mother the whore!
> Who ate my flesh?

My father, for sure!
Little sister gathered
The bones he scattered;
In a cool, cool place they lie.
And then I became a birdie so fine,
And away I fly – away I fly.[8]

This is not a story; it is something both less and more than that: less explanatory and less comprehensible; more fragile and more elusive. Linda Gray Sexton has it right when she comments on the song of the Grimms' bird-boy: "The lyric tells the truth of what happened to him" – the lyric, that is, not the story-in-song.[9] The fairy-tale bird-boy sings a lyric truth, and it is this fairy-tale sound that I would like to follow here. To read the song and the story in which it is heard we shall need to tune in to something more than simply the *tale* in the fairy tale; to try to listen as well as read, the better to hear the haunting strain of "The Juniper Tree."

Reading song-stories

The birdsong in "The Juniper Tree" is extraordinary, a moment of excess in what is an infamously excessive story, nominated by Stith Thompson as "one of the most repelling" in Grimm.[10] The eightfold repetition of the refrain is bludgeon and lyrical incantation, while acting also as one of those delightfully cunning fairy-tale devices, a recounting of events that becomes an event in itself: a lesson in how to do things with song. The song is artful contrivance and a thing of nature; it is human and it is animal. But to begin with the formalities, it is a song sung within a fairy tale, hence set off as verse from a host body of prose. Its difference is marked on the page and sounds when read, producing what W. F. H. Nicolaisen calls "a discernible audible structure," a reminder that fairy tales are things not wholly of the page.[11] The song offers the teller an opportunity, relatively rare in the genre, for the performance of a first-person voice, a voice at once both reassuringly human and, just for a moment in the final line, in the imitative "Peewit, peewit," other ("Kywitt, kywitt" in the German).

One possible name for the hybrid narrative form such as we encounter in "The Juniper Tree" is the *cante fable*, a portmanteau term borrowed from the anonymous medieval French romance *Aucassin et Nicolette*, near the very end of which it makes its one and only appearance in literary history. The *cante fable* is "a tale told in prose, but with its incidents and sentiment helped forward by songs, inserted at irregular intervals."[12] Hence the *cante fable* is a *chante fable*, a tale both "said and sung": a "song-story."[13] "The Juniper Tree" isn't quite a *cante fable* proper, in that it sounds repeatedly just one simple song. Even less so is it a prosimetrum, the more firmly established parent form of the *cante fable*, examples of which include such monuments as the *Consolation of Philosophy* (*c*. 524) and the *Vita nuova* (1295). But then the *cante fable* itself is not quite proper, in that its definition as genre, hence its remit and its history, is still a matter of some dispute. The debate revolves around the relative weight of prose and verse, and the nature of the relation between the two, whether structural or narrative or both. As Nicolaisen says at the end of an exhaustive review of the mixed prose-verse form as it appears in European and American folk tales: "That they [the prose-verse tales] exist is undeniable; what we should unambiguously call them is another matter" (208).

What is not in doubt is that the verse in the tale is for singing. The significant point, at least for all but the folklorists, is that "The Juniper Tree" is incontestably a song-story, and that it is worth attending to its workings, for it is by its workings that it works its singular magic. To read it as an instance of a "song with a story included" is to suggest that the story exists quite happily without the song, hence that the song is an ornamental addition. Clearly this is not right.[14] The story is as it is due in no small part to the presence within it of the song; and the song sounds as it does because it lives in a story. Each of the two parts supplements its other, and yet scant regard has been paid to the little song and to the odd state of affairs given the force of its presence. To admit its attraction here is in fact an interpretative move in tune with the listeners in the very tale itself – the goldsmith, the shoemaker and his family, and the miller's lads, "all twenty of them," each of whom is hypnotized by the song of the bird-boy, a song that seems to hold something of the peculiar and elusive sense

of the fairy tale, perhaps even what we might risk to call the truth of the fairy tale, a truth that we sense most deeply in its tone.

And yet therein lies a dilemma. To single out the song is to contravene one of the laws of fairy-tale reading, the one that states thou shalt not fetishize the text. The interdiction is much repeated, not only by professional scholar-readers for professional scholarly reasons, but also by those for whom the life of the fairy tale is a matter of more general significance: Margaret Atwood, for instance, for whom "The body of folktale is indeed a body, an organic structure made of its many component parts. One story alone is only a finger or a toe";[15] or Philip Pullman: "The fairy tale is in a perpetual state of becoming and alteration. To keep to one version or one translation alone is to put a robin redbreast in a cage…A fairy tale is not a text";[16] or most resonantly, Angela Carter, in a justifiably much-quoted passage:

> Ours is a highly individualized culture, with a great faith in the work of art as a unique one-off, and the artist as an original, a godlike and inspired creator of unique one-offs. But fairy tales are not like that, nor are their makers. Who first invented meatballs? In what country? Is there a definitive recipe for potato soup? Think in terms of the domestic arts. "This is how *I* make potato soup."[17]

Arguments such as these are variations on a theme. The good reader of fairy tales breaks the artificially imposed frame of individual stories, comparing and contrasting en route to an appropriately rounded sense of the material; and the good reader of fairy tales reads across individual versions of individual stories, tracing the twists and turns of plot and image and figure. This is fairy-tale reading as a kind of interpretative cubism, the making of a three-dimensional tale space in and around which the reader can navigate. Of course, such arguments underpin respectively the workings of those extraordinary monuments to good fairy-tale reading, the Aarne-Thompson-Uther classification system and the Thompson motif index, each of which is not only an endlessly useful marvel of scholarship but also an endlessly engrossing marvel of marvels. Carter does what she does best in teasing out the ideological stakes: we should approach fairy tales in the manner stipulated because the constitution and life of the tales

require us so to do; and to do so is to revise tired and harmful models of what it is to write and to read, hence to begin to imagine how such models might appear otherwise. Imagining how such models might appear otherwise is one step on the way to the greater task of imagining how things outside and beyond reading and writing might appear otherwise. To act thus is to deliver on an imagining-otherwise that is the promise of the fairy tale.

And yet. The good reader of fairy tales, which is to say the reader who has taken something of the fairy tale to heart, knows also to violate a prohibition, or at least to treat it with suspicion in the interests of revelation. Counterposed to the supra-textual conception of the tales, a conception the historically appropriate nature of which is beyond doubt, is the lived experience of reading and listening, the always singular, albeit everyday, encounter of reader with story – with *this* story at *this* time in *this* place, in the paradoxically anachronistic here-and-now conjured in each once upon a time. The story may well not be a text in the conventional literary or literary-critical sense, not least because it may well be experienced aurally; but the verbal texture of the tale, its rhythms and patterns and local figures, is often what provokes and what lingers in the mind, a trace memory of time spent in the story's company. We only have to look to the many first-hand accounts by adult readers of precisely such experiences, located usually in childhood or early adolescence, to know that the aforementioned instructions for right and proper fairy-tale reading require a degree of dutiful grown-up forgetfulness, even repression. To be a resisting fairy-tale reader, standing back in order to bring into view the subterranean workings of ideology, should not require that we disavow the force of the singular image or motif, or of a particular textual moment sensed as peculiarly resonant. There is resistance of a kind in fascination and intimacy, in being spellbound. Again, the fairy tale teaches us as much.

Common to each of the statements of the three interested authors is the invocation of nature, of the natural. We hear it in Atwood's "organic" "body" with its neatly fairy-tale image of butchered bits; in Pullman's anthropomorphically living tale tradition, as in his caged bird, the latter a nod to William Blake; and in the rooted artisanal domesticity of Carter's kitchen. Of course, the ground of this invocation is staked with particular

force and resonance in the Preface to *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, in which the "innocent household tales" are figured as "single heads of corn" sheltered "beneath lowly hedges and wayside bushes," left "solitary and unnoticed" until "late summer, by which time they have ripened and grown full."[18] The tales "come to us from that eternal spring which bedews all living things," shaped after the workings of "Nature herself, who made the blossoms and leaves grow in these particular colours and forms" (4). Editorial activity is indigenous labor, a "half-unconscious weaving together, which resembles the continuous, quiet growth of plants and is watered by the immediate source of life" (9). As we can see here, the Preface is "more poetically evocative than argued" – itself something of a fairy tale, that is.[19] It appears now as a period piece of creative prose, highly wrought and all the more enchanting for being so. The great era of scholarly revision, that systematic investigation of the constituent elements of the Grimms' claims authentically to have followed nature's own ways, is behind us now: there is no going back. And yet the call to nature, or at least the argument over precisely what constitutes the natural condition of the tales, continues to resonate, whether in gentle promptings towards correct readerly attitudes or in those critiques of readings or versions felt to be variously aberrant. The nature of the fairy tale appears to matter: fairy tales are a matter of nature; and this is only natural when we consider how nature-soaked they are in themselves, a kaleidoscopic shuffling of a set of root-and-branch material relationships: the human and the non-human; the human and the inhuman; the raw and the cooked; the homely and the foreign; the light and the dark; the inside and the outside; the made and the found; the vertical and the horizontal; the soil and the air; and the water and the fire. In those parts of the world where it has been formed and has passed its time, the fairy tale has had a profound influence – an ambient influence, we could say – on the human-made imagining of what is or should be considered part of nature and the natural. The fairy tale is in our air, whether we like it or not. There is no need to turn conservator to acknowledge the genre as a singular form of environmental literature, ripe at this time of all times for eco-critical attention.

The story of the story

The song of the bird-boy in “The Juniper Tree” is a sounding of such matters, in being at once organic *and* artful, a made thing and a thing found on the air. The bird-boy is a being of body bits and yet a body unto itself, his song a full-throated voicing of nature and a stagey performance pitched for effect. It is of a piece with nature and yet also somehow in excess of it. That such a song should lie nestled in such a tale is really rather fitting, for “The Juniper Tree” is singularly entangled from the beginning with the question of the natural. It arrived with the Grimms via Achim von Arnim, to whom it had been sent, along with “The Tale of the Fisherman and His Wife,” by the painter Philipp Otto Runge. Runge’s version, published by Arnim in 1808, is in Pomeranian (low German) dialect, and so carries an air of folkish authenticity; and yet in folkloristic terms its considerable effect has long been acknowledged as an act of stage management. In Maria Tatar’s words:

> Its florid language along with its inclusion of a formulaic phrase that appears in few other versions of the tale (the mother wishes for a child “as red as blood and as white as snow”) suggest that certain liberties were taken to produce as poetic a text as possible…Runge, a master in the art of ornamental detail and decorative art, gives us a highly stylized version of the tale even as he uses dialect to convey the impression of “artless” narration.[20]

“The Juniper Tree,” like the birdsong that it carries, is artificially natural. While the same could well be said of all fairy tales, this one in particular represents something of a test case. We might say that it is an artificially brilliant fairy tale, an excessively fairy-tale fairy tale – a meta-fairy tale – in which the parts of the body of the genre burn so bright and are so viscerally present as to be little short of over-ripe. “The Juniper Tree” is almost too much.

At the heart of the tale is the fact of its peculiar beauty, a beauty of a piece with the tale’s artificial artlessness and which exists in intimate relation with the ugliness of the drama in question. We have little need of received authority to confirm that it is, as Thompson suggests, “one of the most repelling of the tales,” nominated by Tatar as “probably the most

shocking of all fairy tales."[21] Reading "The Juniper Tree" to her granddaughter, Eva Figes is "appalled by the words coming out of [her] mouth," so much so that she proposes a different story, albeit the child's wary curiosity has been provoked beyond the point of no return.[22] Figes was not read the story as a child but is conscious nonetheless of "a certain freshness, lyricism even, in the telling"; conscious, that is, of a formal and stylistic seductiveness that now appears shocking: "Afterwards, when the child is no longer here, I marvel at so much horror transmuted into such beauty" (74). For this is it, this passage across and between extremes of nature. Tolkien remarks on it – "The beauty and horror of 'The Juniper Tree' with its exquisite and tragic beginning…has remained with me since childhood" – as does P. L. Travers, to whom the tale was "dear…as a child – I still think it most beautiful, even though others protest that it is brutal and bloody."[23]

"The Juniper Tree" is appallingly beautiful and beautifully appalling. Figes captures the effect of exposure to its peculiar force in the hint she drops of being momentarily out of control as she reads – "I am appalled by the words coming out of my mouth" – almost as if divided from herself. Any reading worth its salt should seek to account for the tale's oxymoronic constitution, and for the full life force of each of its attractions – the beautiful and the appalling – not least because the story itself, in the performance of its song, appears aware of its own provocation. Again, the song's the thing, this looped incantation whose interminable and eerie repetition marks the path of the drama. Furthermore, the song seems to be "the most persistent part of this tradition," according to Stith Thompson, the tradition in question being the one coded as tale-type ATU 720, "My mother slew me; my father ate me."[24] Placing the song center stage certainly makes the switching of sibling roles such as we find in the English tale "The Rose-Tree" a matter of diminished significance. The young voice of the bird-boy would be yet to break, so would sound in a high register. And as we know, it is not the females but the males amongst the birds who are nature's songsters. The rose-tree bird-girl is white, "and it sang, and sang, and sang like an angel out of heaven," so we read in Joseph Jacobs's *English Fairy Tales*:

My wicked mother slew me,

My dear father ate me,
My little brother whom I love
Sits below, and I sing above
Stick, stock, stone dead.[25]

Three times she sings her angelic message, one rendition for the reward of each of the three fairy-tale objects: little red shoes, gold watch and chain, and millstone. The equal number of reprises and of objects makes the song one among other objects in the world, available for use for the job at hand. The song is something made, however much it is heard, by us and by its fairy-tale listeners, as a force of nature.

The whiteness of the bird is found also in the Scottish tale "The Milk-White Doo," with its additional specification of a dove as the bird of reincarnation. The song here carries the imitative call at its head rather than, as in "The Juniper Tree," its tail:

Pew, pew,
My minny me slew,
My daddy me chew,
My sister gathered my banes,
And put them between twa milk-white stanes;
And I grew, and I grew,
To a milk-white doo,
And I took to my wings, and away I flew.[26]

The Grimms in their notes remark an imitative "Pew-wew, pew-wew" in Scottish variants, echo of a similar call, "Pippety Pew," from a story of the same name, in which the imitative sound tops and tails the song. Robert Chambers' *The Popular Rhymes of Scotland* even includes at the end of this particular song the direction "Da capo," thereby marking the verse as a text to be sung, and enforcing the repetition. And in a related gesture, Katharine Briggs and Ruth Tongue include as preface a notated tune for the song as it appears in "Little Rosy," the variant of "The Juniper Tree" selected for their *Folktales of England*. The tune, in F Major and 6/8 time, "was learned from Brendon Hills children, who sang it to a kind of singing game in Taunton in 1907."[27]

The song's the thing. But a song is not a song unless heard as such. "The Juniper Tree," along with many of its variants, is extraordinary not least because it dramatizes songful hearing, including as it does figures engaged in precisely the same activity as we are: the act of listening to the song, the difference being that we hear all its performances rather than just an isolated one. We listen to the song *and* to the listeners, and so eavesdrop on what is made of what is heard; for the tale represents carefully two responses, two forms of reception, forms which echo the troubling matter of the fairy tale as an oxymoronic thing at once both beautiful and horrifying.

Fairy-tale listening

From the moment of its appearance in the Grimms' account the bird is marked as beautiful, with a song to match. The goldsmith is the first listener in the fairy-tale threesome.[28] Hearing a song which sounds "so beautiful to his ears," he is spellbound, so much so that he loses a slipper as he follows after the songster, begging for a repeat performance: "Bird… how beautifully you can sing. Sing me that song again" (145). In exchange for the gift of a reprise the bird receives his request, a gold chain. And so begins a trio of such meetings, each comprising the same overpowering response and the same exchange of gifts: a song for an object. The shoemaker leaves the house in his shirtsleeves at the sound of the beautiful song, summoning the members of his family and encouraging them to listen with him. But again the bird knows the worth of his offering: "I shan't sing it twice for nothing; you must give me something as a gift" (146). Having received a pair of red shoes he flies to the mill, where the imitative sounds of labor echo those of the birdsong: "the mill went clip clap, clip clap, clip clap, clip clap" and the miller's lads "hacked, hick hack, hick hack, hick hack." The lads are at work and so is the bird-boy, exchanging wares in order to exact revenge. Just as the propriety of the goldsmith and the shoemaker is momentarily overridden at the sound of the bird, so too does the singing of each new line cause ever more of the mill workers to down tools. And so it is that after a cadential sounding of human labor – "hu-u-up, hu-u-up, hu-u-up!" – the bird receives his third and final object, a millstone (147).

Thus far each of the listeners has responded rapturously to the birdsong. Not one appears to have heard or understood the shocking words enumerating the truth of the boy's fate, words which those of us outside the story have by this point heard six times (seven if you count the telling of the events themselves). It is only when we return to the home of the tale, where the bird alights on the juniper tree, that the song is heard as a thing of words *and* music – although not by the father. He responds in much the same way as the workers, enraptured by the sounds on the air: "Oh mother…there's a beautiful bird. It is singing so splendidly" (148). It is the stepmother and the sister, Marleen, who sense what is coming. Marleen is in tears even before the bird sings, and she continues to cry until she receives the red shoes. Does she hear the words of the song? I think we feel rather that she senses what is coming, hence is weeping for the tragedy of her brother and of the sorry story in which she is caught. Only the stepmother gives any indication of having registered the words of the song as it starts its penultimate sounding. After just one line, albeit the line in which her inaugural guilt is marked, "the mother covered her ears and shut her eyes and would neither see nor hear, but there was a roaring in her ears like the fiercest storm, and her eyes burned and darted like lightning" (148). She continues to be tortured by the presence of the bird, and longs to be "a thousand feet below ground" that she "might not hear it!" In a last-ditch attempt to lighten her heart she steps outside, only to be met by the weight of the millstone miraculously transported by her stepson the bird-boy.

Does the stepmother hear the words of the song? Clearly she does, or at least she feels them as they chime, sensing their meaning in a way different from the responses of the other listeners. She hears not the beauty of the song as sound but the horror of the meaning of the words. The words are a revelation of her actions and of the fate of the bird-boy. We might say that it is not until the stepmother listens that we witness a natural response to the birdsong, a response commensurate with the shocking words we read. The stepmother has heard the truth of the song, and has understood that truth as defined in folkloristic terms, according to the latter of which the bird-as-motif comes under the jurisdiction of a "truth-telling animal" (motif catalogue code B130), a bird who reveals a murder (B131.1); or, reaching a little further into the catalogue, a motif that falls

into the category named “murder will out” (N271) – a category nestled within a subsection concerning “the ways of luck and fate” (N100–N299) – with the tantalizing offer of “Murder discovered through knowledge of bird languages. Bird points out the murder” (N271.4). “The Juniper Tree,” in its guise as a tale-type as opposed to a combination of variously identified motifs, is labeled flatly as “Mother Killed Me, Father Ate Me” (tale-type code ATU 720). Its constituent motifs as catalogued include the facts of reincarnation and return, but again, the heart of the matter feels rather to be the revelation and comprehension of the inaugural crime.[29] For instance, “The Juniper Tree” is often situated within close proximity of ATU 780, a tale-type represented in the Grimms’ collection by “The Singing Bone.” Here, a bone from the body of the murdered brother makes not a truth-singing bird but a truth-telling wind instrument carved by a passing shepherd. The shepherd is enjoined by the brother-as-horn to “hear what I am saying,” which is the story in miniature, complete with criminal, victim, and motive. The shepherd takes the self-declaring evidence to the king; and the king, having “understood it perfectly,” sews up the loose ends.[30]

The neat sense of such endings is rather more difficult to establish in the case of “The Juniper Tree,” despite the fact that the tale is at the same time extraordinary in its artful patterning. Something in this story is in excess of the plot, and in excess also of the constituent motifs with their catalogued will-to-comprehension. Something here evades reasonable comprehension, and so troubles any finished account of the story in terms of a narrative understanding. It would appear self-evident that this element of excess should be related to the song sounded verbatim fully eight times in the course of the story, as if our ability to hear, so to listen properly, is at stake. “Seek its message, listen for its song,” urges Figes (74). The tendency amongst readers and critics has been to subsume the song under the story, one symptom of which interpretative move being a narrativization of the lyric of the bird, making of it a straightforward echo-in-miniature of its setting. As we have seen, the song does tell a truth but it does so *as song*; and song is not quite story, nor can it be. In benignly and entirely understandably narrativizing the song we can with impunity read the response of the stepmother as only natural; or rather, read her response as the natural outcome of a natural process, a form of natural

justice the vehicle for which is birdsong, that most natural element in nature's repertoire. Something unnatural has happened and it is the reasonable work of the fairy tale to run its natural course, so to put things back in the right order.

Lyric truth

This is all good and well, and necessary. And yet to do justice to the song gifted in this song-story requires that we listen a little differently, following in the earsteps of our fairy-tale co-listeners: the goldsmith, the shoemaker, and the miller's lads, characters whose acoustic rapture evades the register of indexers and cataloguers. To listen thus is to be momentarily a Philomela, a lover of song rather than of the logos of the surrounding story, or indeed of the bird's words alone. The conventional critical attitude to the fairy tale as a genre is what we might once have called logocentric, committed variously to the identification and extraction of meaningful semantic content and attendant ideology. Evidence of this logic can be found early in the canon of the fairy-tale tradition itself, in the verse morals appended to his tales by Charles Perrault. It is the same basic interpretative move that underpins the scientism of the type and motif catalogues, the orientation of which toward collation, hence toward the skimming of meaning from plotted material, characterizes much of the mainstream of critical writing on the genre. What claim might be made instead for a melocentric reading of the fairy tale – a reading that privileges music over words – and of this fairy song-story in particular? Mention of Philomela reminds us of the resonantly mythic backstory to our tale, an invocation of founding stories of violence and retribution such as sound in these parts. Others have worked to draw out the mythic elements in "The Juniper Tree," the awful orality and the tragic voicing of cannibalism, transformation, and rebirth figured variously in the multi-dimensional trope of bird transformation.[31] An echo of this dark side of avian shapeshifting makes an appearance in the Grimms' "Jorinda and Joringel," when Jorinda's woodland song turns in the midst of its final line: "My little bird with his ring so red…Sings sorrow, sorr – jug jug, jug jug."[32] To draw out the enchanted strain in the thought of Philomela does not require that we whitewash the dark side,

only that we don't make a tragedy of fairy tale, thereby shutting our ears to the singular tone of its warning call.

The narrative truth of the tale is plain for all to see, not least in the stepmother's reaction on hearing the revelations of the birdsong; but to be witness to the awful events of the tale – and no reader or listener can evade that responsibility – is to acknowledge also a sense that the song carries something in addition to its relaying of events, something we might for a moment, and with due caution, call a lyric truth. We hear this note in the not-quite-narrative of the words of the song, in their chanting lament; in the unadorned repetition that lays down the ritual rhythm, the point-counterpoint, of the tale's performance; in the threefold dramatic testimony to the unheard beauty of the sound of the song; and in the fleeting moment in the final line when the story acknowledges the sound, and so the possibility, of a language other than its own: "Peewit, peewit." Each of these elements is a working part of the machinery of the story, and yet each remains at a slight angle to the tale as conceived in narrative terms – that is, in terms of a temporal drama of character, cause and effect. Which is all to say, again, that the song's the thing wherein we might hope to catch something or other of the troubling lure of "The Juniper Tree."

To begin, we can acknowledge that the music of the birdsong is straightforwardly a mark of otherness in being, precisely, otherworldly. This is the main conclusion drawn by Nicolaisen from the aforementioned survey of those folk tales in which verse – much of which signifies also song – is interleaved with prose. In the case of the sung parts we are with "either supernatural beings or humans temporarily enchanted in one way or another by supernatural beings. Non-prosaic language is the language of non-prosaic speakers" (186). Hence

> the use of rhyme and verse…is the result of a deliberately and consciously applied distinction between ordinary narrative prose and language fit to be spoken by or to those who inhabit space beyond, or at least outside, everyday life and who therefore, in their numinosity and otherness, are for good or for evil involved with language as a ritualizing and distancing device.
>
> (190)

Our encounter with the bird-boy is thus an encounter not only with an otherworldly presence, but also with an otherness present within the very medium of the encounter, within language itself, the markers of which presence would be those non-discursive or extra-semantic elements conventionally associated with lyric, namely the likes of rhythm, repetition, rhyme, and sonority. The so-called musicality of language is in excess of its discursive function, and this excess is sounded most forcefully in song. The numinosity of the bird-boy is carried in his song just as the otherwordliness of the singer serves to mark in the fairy tale this other dimension of language-as-song or song-as-language. Writing from within the folkloristic camp, Nicolaisen places the stress on the figure of the singer, whereas Joseph Nagy, similarly folkloristic in orientation, finds it to be more a matter of the song. Nagy identifies what he calls "the Singing Bone pattern" in "stories that have to do with the invention of a special musical instrument. In these narratives, the instrument – or music in general – functions as a means of taking revenge and gaining retribution for the instrument itself or the performer who plays upon it."[33] Hence the trope here christened "vengeful music." Nagy's starting point is the aforementioned ATU 720, "The Singing Bone," but he develops the proposal of other folklorists in reading ATU 780, including "The Juniper Tree," as underpinned by "the same pattern," hence as "basically similar" to its bone-singing partner (188). The bird-boy in this reading is "his own *instrument*," a wonderfully suggestive thought whether or not we feel entirely comfortable with the tendencies of the comparative method. Nagy detects in his tale pattern nothing less than a "fascinating ideology of music and musical performance," encompassing, so he speculates, a general human belief: music as protective and as upholding "fundamental cultural realities," an otherworldly element in the service of worldly equilibrium. As such, music is "culture's own projection, a 'gift' that circulates near and far. As a gift from performer to audience, music…serves to demonstrate the strength of the cultural principle of reciprocity: that it is better to give than to take, since an act of giving demands a counter-act of giving, while an act of taking leads to more taking" (189).

Nagy's reading chimes with Alissa Nutting's proposal of "The Juniper Tree" as reliant above all on the "transcendental and sorcerous power of

music," a force that figures as both the language of an other and another form of language.[34] It could be argued that such music is best left silent, that to sound it out would be to make it a thing of the world, hence paradoxically to render it inaudible. And yet the possibility remains that the fairy tale as genre carries within itself this lyric strain, as borne out most resonantly, perhaps, in the seemingly oxymoronic form of the purely musical *conte* or *märchen*: Maurice Ravel's *Contes de ma mère l'oye*, for instance, or Robert Schumann's *Märchenbilder* and *Märchenzählungen*, character pieces in which the stated affiliation with the fairy tale is variously fixed. What do we hear when we listen to such tales without words? What is left of fairy tale once it has been stripped of word and image? Individual instrumental lines might be heard as performing in sound the moves of a character; shifts of motif and harmony as shadowing developments in the drama; and general impressions of tone and color as notating in music the ambience of a tale or of the genre, a sense of delight or foreboding or tomfoolery or some such. Something of the fairy tale is caught in these sounds, something that unfolds over time, as does narrative, but which cannot be reduced solely to the tracking in sound of a plot. In addition to their purely acoustic translation of drama, the best of such works – the Schumann in particular, along with Leoš Janáček's *Pohádka* – sound out the lyric element in the fairy tale in the sense of a making with sound that is also a questioning or an inquiry. They act on the listener – on you and me – after the manner of the song of the bird-boy as heard by his three entranced audiences. Sexton is right to hear a lyric element at play here, but it does not follow that such enchantment should be conceived negatively, as a failure "to recognize or to hear the words of the song," as if the bird-boy is "singing a poem in a language they [his auditors] cannot interpret."[35] How can we find fault in a moment of enchantment that echoes our own relationship to the story? These listeners interpret the song perfectly well, not least when they hear a note of transfixing beauty sung by a creature of nature who is also one of us, and in whose song we catch something of the condition of these counterpointed tones.

Soul music

In the substance of what it tells, the song of the bird-boy is as heavy as the millstone for which it is exchanged, whereas birdsong is light as a feather, carried on the air as an almost-nothing. It is a pouring forth of soul music, as Margaret Atwood comes close to saying in noting the apparent "natural affinity" of souls and birds in the realm of folk tale and myth: "it must be the airiness, the seeming weightlessness, the wings, the singing."[36] Soul music is also a more compact way of marking what is identified elsewhere as "numinosity and otherness." The song of the air is an aria, for "The Juniper Tree" is an opera in miniature, in both content and form: in the ritual unfolding of primitive passions and dynastic feuding, and in the constitutive rhythmic alteration of narration and song, what in conventional operatic terms we would call recitative and aria, a rhythm akin to the "discernible audible structure" of the *cante fable*. Operatic aria is the lyric counterpoint to the narration out of which it emerges and into which it feeds, a periodic act of songful self-reflection sounding its own peculiar sense. While the medium of opera is music and not words – albeit a battle for control between word and tone is the motor of operatic history – the fact that "The Juniper Tree" arrives pre-fitted with story and song means it is ripe for operatic setting. Chief amongst such attempts, at least for those concerned with the afterlife of the fairy tale, is Andrew Toovey and Dic Edwards's single-act chamber work of 1993, the narrative of which is a shrunken and slightly tweaked version of the Grimms' tale.[37] The most significant tweak – apart from the fact that being an opera the music itself enacts something akin to the missing third-person voice of the fairy tale – is the excision of the three enchanted listeners, hence of the gift motif, which leaves the stepmother still living at the end of the drama, albeit distanced from the reunited family unit. (Although excluded, the stepmother is at least partially forgiven by the bird-boy in the course of the final scene.) A reminder of the enchanted listeners in the source story can be heard in the father's injunction on first encountering the birdsong: "listen to the tune not the words," an instruction to mark, so to sound out, the two registers of the fairy tale, the narrative-dramatic and the lyric; for the Orphic pact of opera involves not merely the verbal indication but the *sounding* of extraordinary music. The melancholic birdsong here is broadly melodic, a lyrical counterpart to the atonal dissonance of the music of the business of the tale – that is, of the music of the narrative.

Hence the iterated songful register, echoed elsewhere in broad string and woodwind lines, arises out of and is set against a markedly distinct music of the dramatic business. It appears fitting, given the rhetorical play of marked and unmarked music, that the song should be reprised at the close of the opera, even though the songbird has now returned as a boy. The refrain drifts into the distance, the sound of what has passed and of what remains.

"Listen to the tune not the words." For Dic Edwards, author of this instruction to listen otherwise, the birdsong serves not only to "counter… the bleakness" of the story but also to "ground the fairy tale."[38] This idea of song-as-ground might seem to be at odds with a more immediately apparent sense in which the song is instead an object placed against or embedded within prose foundations. Yet it does feel at times as if the song is where the story comes from, even that the song is the essence of the tale, as song was once believed to be close to the root of language. The birdsong would thus be a pre-verbal fairy tale, not in its words but in its tones, tracing in melody the peculiar feel and sense of the fairy tale, at once familiar and always strange. There is of course a danger in the lure of the idea of a lyric truth free of the dirty dramas of tale and myth, especially when located in the too-familiar trope of the language of the birds. And aria is not quite the right word for this song because the bird-boy does not expand or meditate upon his predicament after the manner suggested by generic convention. He is not reflecting upon himself, but then neither is he singing the ballad of his story. We might even say the song mimics, or perhaps echoes, the fairy tale in the same way as human speech is mimicked by certain birds, in an act of unwitting estrangement that works to prevent such a shocking story settling into comfortable familiarity. Conceived thus, the song is indeed the thing wherein to catch the conscience of "The Juniper Tree," and to sense the call made in the tale to the conscience of each of its adult readers. The refrain of the song, with its excessively iterated interruption, works to catch our memory, and in so doing, to resist allowing plot to naturalize unnatural events. The refrain implores us, insistently, not to forget.

There is a tendency for commentary on the fairy tale to err on the side of a domesticating comprehension, to make relatively plain sense of the often ornately senseless beauty and violence of the material. No doubt the

storied pull of the tales does have such sense as a part of its nature, powered as it is by a seemingly indigenous will-to-comprehension. To attend to the bird-boy song, as I have sought to do here, is to draw out an equally natural strain, but one that is unassimilable to an interpretative reading for which fairy-tale drama is a riddle to be solved. The lyric register of the fairy tale is not distinct from the narrative: each is caught and caught up one in the other, narrative in lyric and vice versa. Speaking of the verse that appears in folk-tale song-stories such as "The Juniper Tree," Joseph Campbell suggests that "The spell of rhythm and rhyme is the spell of *once upon a time*."[39] And it is true, the birdsong does cast a spell, a lamenting spell that rhythms its way through its own tale; a lamenting spell that is the fairy tale itself, a strangely familiar chant about weightily plotted things that is also beautifully lightsome and, especially in its iterations, utterly strange. And all the while the fairy-tale bird-boy passes by "Singing its song of horror…but singing it with such beauty that all who heard felt light of heart, not grief."[40] The bird-boy brings a message, although not from the gods: a lyric message marked "return to sender." There is nothing mythically pure here, nothing that isn't already mixed, especially not the song itself, the animal call of which is at its most human in that briefest of moments when it sounds its own animal note: "Kywitt, kywitt," retweeted variously as "Peewit, Peewit," "Cheep, Cheep," and, yes, "Tweet, Tweet." It is the keynote of a human-made desire both to remember and to continue to imagine otherwise. Fairy tale is the thing with feathers.

Notes

1 "The Tale of the Juniper Tree," in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Selected Tales*, trans. Joyce Crick (Oxford University Press, 2005), 144. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from "The Juniper Tree" (as I shall call it here) are taken from the Crick translation. Further references will be given as page numbers, which refer to this volume, in the text.

2 Refrain also holds in its history the Provençal *refranhar*, the singing of birds.

3 Robert Coover, *Pricksongs and Descants: Fictions* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971).

4 E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 42, 87.

5 Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, 87.

6 *Grimm's Goblins: Grimm's Household Stories*, trans. Edgar Taylor (London: R. Meek & Co., 1876), 284.

7 Jennifer Schacker, *National Dreams: The Remaking of Fairy Tales in Nineteenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 29.

8 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, Part I, trans. David Luke (Oxford University Press, 1987), 4412–20.

9 Linda Gray Sexton, "Bones and Black Puddings: Revisiting *The Juniper Tree*," in *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Women Writers Explore their Favorite Fairy Tales*, ed. Kate Bernheimer (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 315.

10 Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 458.

11 W. F. H. Nicolaisen, "The *Cante Fable* in Occidental Folk Narrative," in *Prosimetrum: Crosscultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse*, ed. Joseph Harris and Karl Reichl (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1977), 194. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

12 Walter Pater, *"Aucassin and Nicolette": Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873; Oxford University Press, 2010), 12.

13 See for example Andrew Lang's introduction to his translation of 1887.

14 Katharine M. Briggs and Ruth L. Tongue, eds., *Folktales of England* (University of Chicago Press, 1965), 90.

15 Margaret Atwood, "Of Souls as Birds," in *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall*, ed. Bernheimer, 21–2.

16 Philip Pullman, *Grimm Tales: For Young and Old* (London: Penguin, 2012), xix.

17 Angela Carter, ed., *The Virago Book of Fairy Tales* (London: Virago, 1990), x.

18 "Preface to the Second Edition" (1819), in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Selected Tales*, trans. Crick, 3. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

19 Joyce Crick, in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Selected Tales*, 306.

20 Maria Tatar, *Off With Their Heads! Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood* (Princeton University Press, 1992), 220.

21 Maria Tatar, "Introduction to 'Hansel and Gretel,'" in *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales*, ed. Tatar (New York: Norton, 2002), 183.

22 Eva Figes, *Tales of Innocence and Experience: An Exploration* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 72. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

23 J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories" (1938), in *Tree and Leaf* (London: Unwin Books, 1964), 32; P. L. Travers, "Only Connect," in *Only Connect: Readings in Children's Literature*, ed. Sheila Egoff, G. T. Stubbs, and L. F. Ashley (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1980), 201.

24 Thompson, *The Folktale*, 116.

25 "The Rose-Tree," in *English Fairy Tales*, ed. Joseph Jacobs (London: David Nutt, 1890), 17.

26 George Douglas, ed., *Scottish Fairy and Folk Tales* (*c*. 1901; New York: Dover, 2000), 72.

27 Briggs and Tongue, eds., *Folktales of England*, 26–7.

28 The goldsmith is in fact the second listener. The sister, present at the birth of the bird-boy, is the privileged auditor.

29 "Resuscitation by arrangement of members" (E30) and "*Reincarnation: boy to bird to boy*. Boy returns as bird, who later becomes the boy" (E610.1.1).

30 Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, "The Singing Bone," in *Selected Tales*, trans. Crick, 97–8.

31 On the mythic over- and undertones of "The Juniper Tree," see in particular Tatar, "Telling Differences: Parents vs. Children in *The Juniper Tree*," in *Off With Their Heads!*, 212–28.

32 "Jorinda and Joringel," in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Selected Tales*, trans. Crick, 190. Crick's imitative "jug jug, jug jug" invokes the conventional English representation of the nightingale's song, a convention that stretches back at least as far as the early sixteenth century.

33 Joseph F. Nagy, “Vengeful Music in Traditional Narrative,” *Folklore* 95.2 (1984), 182–90: 82. Further references will be given as page numbers in the text.

34 Alissa Nutting, “The Brother and the Bird,” in *My Mother She Killed Me, My Father He Ate Me: Forty New Fairy Tales*, ed. Kate Bernheimer (New York: Penguin, 2010), 41.

35 Sexton, “Bones and Black Puddings,” 315. Further, this unheard language is “the language of death, about which so many of us…do not want to hear.”

36 Atwood, “Of Souls as Birds,” 35.

37 Andrew Toovey, *Juniper Tree*, an opera in one act with libretto by Dic Edwards (Largo: CDC 724355667526, 1997). First performed in Broomhill, England, July 1993.

38 Dic Edwards, personal correspondence, October 30, 2012.

39 Joseph Campbell, “Folkloristic Commentary,” in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, trans. Margaret Hunt, rev. James Stern (New York: Pantheon Books, 1944), 843.

40 Figes, *Tales of Innocence and Experience*, 74.

10 Sex, crime, magic, and mystery in the *Thousand and One Nights*

Ulrich Marzolph

In his book *The Unraveling of Secret Measures: What You Should Know about Hidden Treasures*, Muhammad ibn ʻAbd al-Razzāq narrates the following story:

> At the time of the Fatimid Caliph al-Hākim, there lived in Cairo a butcher named Wardān. Every day, a beautiful woman came to him. After wishing him a good morning, she gave him two gold dinars, bought a whole lamb from him, and asked him to chop it in two halves. Then she ordered a porter to carry it in his basket and walked away. This went on for a certain while.
>
> One day, when Wardān wondered about this woman's story, he had a look at the gold coins that he had received from her. As he found them to be minted long ago, he was puzzled. At first he thought that she must certainly be a pimp. He went to see the porter who would carry her lamb and asked him who she was. The porter said: "By God, Sir, she is indeed a wondrous person! When she orders me to carry the lamb, she goes to a Christian monk in the 'Castle of Candles,' gives him two golden dinars, and buys two bottles of wine from him. Then she gives him another dinar which he changes to 20 dirhams, and for 10 dirhams she buys fruits, munchies, candles, and a little bread as well as other items needed for a meal such as vegetables, spices, and firewood. She asks me to carry all this to the vizier's garden in the vicinity of the mountains. There she blindfolds me with two layers of bandages, takes me by the hand, and leads me through garbage and rubbish for a whole hour. When I finally place the basket on a large boulder, I grab an empty basket from there, and she leads me back to the place where she had blindfolded me. She removes the bandages, gives me 10 dirhams in wages, and tells me to keep her secret so as not to endanger my livelihood." When Wardān heard this, he became even more certain that she was a pimp. He said to the

porter: “My brother, by God you have told the truth! You are not going to lose your income! We are going to make her pay dearly for the damage she causes. Now you keep the secret to yourself!”

Wardān waited for the woman until she came again, bought the lamb as usual, and went away. He left his son in charge of the shop and followed her to the other places she visited until she left the city, all the while being extremely careful so that she would not notice him. When she blindfolded the porter and led him by the hand, he continued to follow her until they reached that large boulder. Wardān hid himself behind another boulder until she returned from bringing the porter back to his original place. She took everything from the basket and suddenly disappeared. Wardān approached the boulder on which the basket was still standing and noticed the entrance to an underground vault at its side, with steps leading down. He went down until he reached a dark vestibule on whose far side he saw light. He went there until he came close to the light and found to his right side the door to a room that was brightly lit, even though he did not know where the light came from. He sat down in the dark at the threshold and looked into the room. Inside the room he suddenly noticed a black bear as big as a camel. The woman had taken one half of the lamb, and after cutting off the best bits she threw the rest of it to that bear. The bear devoured it to the last bite, breaking the bones with its teeth as if they were meat cleavers. The woman took a pot and boiled the meat that she had previously cut off from the piece she had thrown to the bear. She hung the lamb’s other half onto a hook in a place where there was a draft of air, although Wardān did not know where this draft came from. When her food was ready, she poured it into a vessel of cream, ate her fill, and put the leftovers aside. She took the fruits and munchies, poured some of the wine into a crystal jar adorned with brilliant jewels, and drank it. She also gave wine to the bear who slurped every drop she poured for him. This went on until the first bottle of wine was finished. Then she got up, took off her trousers, and lay down. The bear mounted her and copulated with her. After the first time he ravished her a second time, and yet another time until he had done a full ten times in one go. All the while both of

them had been moaning and groaning until they finally reached fulfillment. The bear fell to her side as if dead, and so did she.

Wardān said to himself: “Why am I sitting here? If the bear regains consciousness and sees me, it will certainly slit my belly open!” Since he was an experienced butcher, he had with him the sharp knife that he used to separate the flesh from the bones. Now he took that knife, grabbed the bear by the throat, and separated its head from its body. When the bear let out a final snort – like a cow’s head when it is cut off – the woman woke up and screamed like mad. She saw Wardān on top of the bear’s carcass with the knife in his hand, while the bear’s head had been separated from his body. She let out a heartbreaking shriek and shouted at him: “Wardān! Why did you do this?” Wardān shouted back at her: “You slut! What made you do this terrible thing? Are there no more men on earth?” She responded: “Wardān! This has been written down as my destiny! Since my time has come now, you must slit my throat too, just as you have killed this bear! After this has happened, there is no point for me to live on in this world!” “You should fear God, the Almighty, and repent before Him!” said Wardān. “I will legally marry you. Together we will live the rest of our lives while spending this treasure, and God will turn everything to the better!” But she said: “Don’t be silly, Wardān, kill me and do not falter! If you don’t do it, somebody else might come here one day! Besides – if you don’t do what I ask you to do, I will destroy you. But if you do it, you will be saved together with all the treasures that are here!”

Wardān challenged her: “What power do you have to destroy me?” So she turned towards a basin in the middle of the room that was filled with a little water. She murmured a spell, and suddenly the water gushed forth, and in the twinkling of an eye it already went up the circlet around her ankle. “Wardān!” she said. “Save your soul and kill me as I command you, or else you will drown!” And Wardān responded: “Stop this, you witch! I will do as you ask me to!” She pronounced another spell, and the water went back to its original state. Then she commanded him to do to her as he had done to the bear, and Wardān seized her by the hair, cut her throat, and left her to the side of the bear.

Then he took from the pearls and jewels as much as he could carry, put it into the porter's basket, covered it up with a few pieces of cloth, and went on his way. When he reached the city gate, the guards kept him from entering, saying: "Wardān, don't be afraid! You are asked to present yourself in front of the ruler!" When they had brought him to the ruler's presence, the ruler asked him: "Now then, Wardān, have you killed the bear and the slut?" Being perplexed (by how the ruler could know this), Wardān said: "Yes, o Commander of the faithful!" Then the ruler asked Wardān to show him the contents of his basket, had a look at it, and covered it up again, saying: "Wardān, this is what destiny has in store for you, and nobody will dispute this!"

After this, Wardān took his mule, and together with the ruler he went to the treasure. There he said: "O Commander of the faithful! Now step down and look for yourself how terrible the appearance of that bear is!" The ruler responded: "You are wrong here, Wardān! You are not going to see that bear and that woman again! They both sacrificed their lives for that treasure, so that you could take it easily. The treasure could only be taken by you, and nobody else can possibly go down there! Now go down and hand me everything there is, and do not pay attention to what happened on the bed!" Wardān went down and did not find a trace of either the bear or the women, nor was there any blood.

Wardān took from the vault all the treasures, jewels, and other goods, and handed them to the ruler. The ruler carried the treasures to a certain building and stored it there, hiding it deep inside a hidden vault whose remnants can still be seen today. To Wardān he delivered the basket full of jewels, giving orders that nobody should ever dare to dispute his ownership. Wardān invested the money in constructing all those shops that today are known as "Wardān's market stalls." And God knows best![1]

Figure 10.1 After having killed the bear, Wardān slits the woman's throat. From the 1855 edition of the Persian translation of the *Thousand and One Nights*, illustrated by Mirzâ 'Ali-Qoli Kho'i.

The tale of "Wardān the Butcher, the Woman, and the Bear" is remarkable for various reasons. To a modern reader, its most provocative aspect in terms of content is probably the vividly portrayed sexual encounter between the woman and the bear, including the prefatory meal and intoxication. Though sex between human beings and animals is not alien to premodern Arabic literature in general, we may rightly presume that a premodern audience would have been as shocked by the revolting sexual act of bestiality as a modern one. Even so, the sexual encounter is not devoid of a certain crude humor, and the bear's sexual prowess might even have appealed to the audience (an audience that most probably was exclusively male). Provocative as it may be, it is a truism that sex usually makes a good story. The effect of this ambiguous attraction is even more striking when the sexual encounter is illicit, in other words when sex is considered a crime. In addition to sex and crime, magic as a third ingredient of a good story enters the stage. Magic is at work when the

witch threatens to inundate Wardān, and magic might also be behind the ruler's secret knowledge. The tale's latter half makes it clear that the bestial encounter Wardān had witnessed had not been real. The ruler, who obviously has access to secret knowledge, knows that Wardān's experience had only been a phantasm, an illusion that had taken place for the sole purpose of attracting the protagonist's attention and enticing him to kill the treasure's guardians. Only in this manner was he able to fulfill the written destiny that he, and nobody else but he, was to become the treasure's owner. None of the living beings the hero encountered was real, as neither their dead bodies remain nor even a trace of the blood he spilled when killing them. And yet again, he himself experienced the sensual and physical dimensions of his encounter as perfectly real: the couple's groaning when engaged in brute sex, the bear's shrieking as he cut off his head, and the fright he himself went through when the witch threatened to drown him. Besides playing on sex, crime, and magic, the tale's multifarious levels of attractiveness also include mystery as a challenge to the limits of human intelligence and perception. Above and beyond its juicy ingredients, however, the tale's central message focuses on the working of destiny: each human being has a predestined fate that he or she has to fulfill, whether consciously or unconsciously, whether intentionally or not.

So the tale of "Wardān the Butcher, the Woman, and the Bear" contains several of the ingredients that make a fascinating story. But does this story of sex, crime, and magic belong to that fabulous and world-renowned collection called *The Tales of the Thousand and One Nights* – the collection that in English is known as *The Arabian Nights* or, as I will simply call it in the following, the *Nights*? The tentative answer to this question is both yes and no. No, because the above tale has been translated from a work dealing with the history of the Fatimid rulers in Egypt whose author, a certain Ibn al-Dawādārī, lived at the beginning of the fourteenth century CE. Before telling the tale, Ibn al-Dawādārī mentions that he found it in a book for treasure hunters. That book in turn relates the narrated events to the reign of the Fatimid Caliph al-Hākim, a ruler who was in power at the beginning of the eleventh century CE. The tale's documented history thus goes back at least some seven centuries, and its protagonist – the butcher Wardān – is even said to have lived about a

thousand years ago. The tale's supernatural context makes us understand that the tale is history only in a wider sense. It embellishes a certain ruler's image while simultaneously supplying a wondrous and fascinating explanation for a certain location that is still known to the tale's present audience. The tale does not even pretend to be historically faithful; it is rather a *ben trovato*, or history as it "might have been." And yet, the answer might also be yes, since a version of the tale is also included in the *Thousand and One Nights*, or, to be exact, in the manuscript or family of manuscripts that served as the basis of the Bulaq edition published in 1835 and the following Calcutta II edition of the *Nights* published in 1839–42.[2] Those who make the effort to read the *Nights* from beginning to end would find the tale that in the Calcutta II edition is told in nights 353–5. Meanwhile, the tale does not belong to the usual suspects of tales from the *Nights* that would be published in the popular editions. Given its provocative content, it is particularly unlikely that the tale would ever be included in any of the innumerable selections addressing children and young adults. With their highly repetitive selections of tales from Galland's *Nights*, these editions certainly shaped the popular perception of the *Nights* as a collection of fairy tales more than the "complete" or even the "scholarly" ones.

Considering the above outlines of the tale's origins, various questions come to mind: How did the fantastic tale of "Wardān the Butcher, the Woman, and the Bear" end up in the *Nights*? Since when was it included in the *Nights*, and from which source did the compilers of the *Nights* copy it? Why did they judge it suitable for inclusion in the *Nights*? More generally we might even wonder: Why was it necessary to "compile" the *Nights*? Was there no complete and finished version of the collection available? Or otherwise: Why would it have been necessary to fill up an unfinished or incomplete version with tales from different sources so as to make it complete? In the following, these questions will guide the reader through the complex history of the *Nights*. By referring to this specific tale every now and then, the present chapter will discuss the origins of the *Nights* and the genesis of the collection as it is widely known today – a collection of tales of mystery and magic or, if you like, of fairy tales. At this point we need to remind ourselves that fairy tales are a European, a Western, and at best an Indo-European genre. In the context of the *Nights*, as in most non-European contexts, the term fairy tale only makes sense if understood in a

wider sense. Even though fairies make an appearance in various tales of the *Nights*, the fairy as a wish-fulfilling character is not a standard persona in the *Nights*. If we speak of fairy tales in the *Nights*, the term rather denotes a tale in which the supernatural, often a human being endowed with supernatural powers or a supernatural creature, intervenes in human matters. This intervention can work to a character's advantage, as in the tale of Wardān, but often it leads to damaging consequences.

A first attempt to fathom the role of fairy tales in the *Nights* must discuss our knowledge about the collection's genesis and early history. The actual origin of the *Nights* is not at all clear. Even though the *Nights* are mentioned in Arabic literature as early as the tenth century, available testimony does not supply more than a vague outline of the characteristic frame tale. In its full version, this frame tale tells us about two brothers, allegedly kings of the Sassanian dynasty, the last Iranian dynasty that ruled Iran before the Islamic conquest. When the younger brother prepares to visit his elder brother, he bids farewell to his beloved wife. However, since he has forgotten something important at home, he returns unexpectedly only to find his wife engaged in extramarital sexual activity. Having killed his wife and her lover, he falls into a deep melancholy when he reaches his brother. Since he does not divulge his secret, his brother remains in the dark about what happened to him. One day, however, when the elder brother is out hunting, the younger brother watches his brother's wife and a number of her entourage engage in a sexual orgy. Realizing that he is not alone in his affliction and that his brother's misfortune is even greater than his own, the younger brother regains his good spirits again. When he informs his brother about the events, the latter kills his wife and her entourage, and both brothers set out on wanderings in search of a faithful wife. One day, the two fall prey to a woman who is kept by her demon husband inside a chest, so that she will not betray him. Even so, when the demon is sleeping with his head on her lap, the woman blackmails both men into having sex with her, as she has previously had with a large number of other men. Finally realizing that women's wiles are endless, the brothers return home. Meanwhile, they draw different consequences from their experience. While the younger brother makes a vow of celibacy, the older brother takes to marrying a new wife every day, only to have her killed in the morning. When the kingdom is almost depleted of marriageable women, the vizier's daughter Shahrāzād (Scheherazade)

promises to reform the king. She marries him, but before the king falls asleep at night, she has her sister (or her maid) Dīnāzād invite her to tell a tale. At the break of day, the tale is not yet finished, so the king permits Shahrāzād to live on until she can finish the tale. This continues for a total of one thousand and one nights. When Shahrāzād finally presents a number of children to the king, he admits that he has been reformed and promises to end his ruthless practice.

Referring to this frame tale, modern analytical research has variously argued for the collection's Indian or Iranian origin. A commentary to the holy scriptures of the Jains mentions a tale in which a royal concubine tells a story or a riddle to the ruler for several nights, usually delaying the story's ending to the following night. Shahrāzād's action in the *Nights* thus echoes a stratagem already known from ancient Indian literature. Analogies in ancient Indian literature have also been documented for the story of the demon who keeps his human wife imprisoned in a chest and for the story of the man who understands the language of animals, a tale the vizier narrates to prevent his daughter from marrying the cruel king. One of the major obstacles in determining the relation of these texts to their later versions in the *Nights* is, however, the difficulty in dating early Indian literature. Be that as it may, ancient Indian literature abounds in tales of extramarital sexual activities. And since the narrative compilations of pre-Islamic Iran draw to a certain extent on Indian precursors, this argument might to a certain extent also be valid for the early version of the *Nights*.

The collection's Iranian origin is corroborated by two short passages in tenth-century Arabic sources. More or less agreeing with each other, Arabic historian al-Mas'ūdī (died 956) and Baghdad bookseller Ibn al-Nadīm (died 995) mention a Persian book named *Hezār afsān* – a title that can be translated in English as "A Thousand Wonderful Stories," or in Arabic as *Alf khurāfa*. This book is quoted to be known as *Alf layla* (A Thousand Nights) – a title that outlines a certain duration without, however, indicating the number of tales narrated during this period. The collection's frame tale as sketched by Ibn al-Nadīm is identical to that of the *Nights* as we know the work today. An additional argument for the collection's Iranian origin has been seen in the fact that the frame tale suggests an Iranian context. King Shahriyār (whose name means "hero")

is said to belong to the Sassanian dynasty. Shahriyār's brother Shāhzamān (whose name means "king of the period") is introduced as the ruler of the city of Samarkand in Middle Asia. Furthermore, the name of the collection's narrator, Shahrāzād, is also Iranian, meaning "of noble appearance or ancestry." The collection's sheer existence is thus documented for the tenth century, when an (adapted?) Arabic translation of the Iranian original is known to exist. Ibn al-Nadīm even mentions having seen various manuscripts of the work. It is quite unfortunate for us that he did not bother to supply any details, since he regarded the collection's tales as dull and boring. The collection's Persian origin is also mentioned by a certain ʻAbdallāh b. ʻAbdalʻazīz who – in his mid-ninth-century book on secretaries – attributed the translation of the *Nights* into Arabic to Ibn al-Muqaffaʻ, the translator of the Arabic version of the well-known tales of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* from Persian to Arabic.[3]

Meanwhile, the oldest documentary evidence testifying to the collection's existence even pre-dates the tenth-century testimonies in Arabic literature. The first page of a paper fragment found in the Cairo Geniza clearly shows the Arabic title *Kitāb hadīth alf layla* (A Book of Narratives of a Thousand Nights).[4] The fragment's second page contains the beginning of the well-known frame tale in which the unnamed narrator's servant asks her to tell some tales. Additional scribbling on the sheet of paper dating to the year 879 serves as a convincing argument to date the fragment of the *Nights* to before that date. This evidence indicates that the originally Persian work had already been translated into Arabic before the eighth century CE. Moreover, the "striking examples of the excellencies and shortcomings, the cunning and stupidity, the generosity and avarice, and the courage and cowardice" of human beings the narrator is asked to tell in the fragment indicate a content that does not converge with the later *Nights* in which, after all, tales of magic play an important role. Therefore, we presume that different versions of the *Nights* might already have existed at an early stage.

Around the year 1150, a Jewish bookseller in Cairo lent a book titled *Alf layla wa-layla* (A Thousand Nights and a Night) to one of his customers and kept a note of this transaction in a little booklet.[5] This incident has preserved the earliest documentary evidence for the collection's extended title. We do not know when or for what reason the thousand-and-first night

was added to the thousand nights of storytelling the collection is said to last. At any rate, the change in title follows a schema that is already attested in Arabic literature of the tenth century.[6] As an ingenious move, the new title extends the previous notion of unfathomable multitudes (a thousand) into a notion of sheer infinity (a thousand and one) that promises endless variety – just like the English "forever and a day."

Up to this stage, besides the collection's sheer existence, we do not know anything about the actual content of the *Nights*. This content only begins to reveal itself with the oldest preserved text in a fragmentary manuscript dating from the fifteenth century. The manuscript consists of three volumes and contains the text up to the beginning of night 282, breaking off in the middle of the love story of *Qamar al-Zamān and Budūr*. The stories or cycles of stories of this old manuscript are today regarded as the core corpus of the *Nights*. Most of these stories share two features. First, their content links them to the frame tale, since the characters in the tales have to tell stories in order to save their own lives or rescue another character, just as Shahrāzād does in the frame tale. The ability to tell a story thus becomes tantamount to survival or life.[7] This feature plays an important role in the manuscript's very first story, the tale of "The Merchant and the Jinnī," in which the Jinnī threatens to kill the merchant for having killed, albeit inadvertently, the Jinnī's son by carelessly throwing away a date stone. One after the other, three old men pass by and each of them convinces the Jinnī to spare a third of the merchant's life in exchange for the wondrous stories they tell. Second, several of the stories in the old manuscript are not told in a linear manner. They rather constitute diligently structured complex narratives changing between various layers that are, in their turn, told by different narrators. This feature is particularly evident in the "Story of the Hunchback," with several layers of embedding. The *Nights* thus present themselves as a story told by an anonymous storyteller in which Shahrāzād tells a story in which somebody tells a story that frames the story of yet somebody else.

In terms of genre, the stories of the old manuscript are tales of unusual and wondrous events, and several of them involve magic. The story of "The Fisherman and the 'Ifrīt" together with its sequel story of "The Semi-Petrified Prince" mentions a sorceress who has transformed the inhabitants of a certain city into fishes of various color by putting a spell

on them; moreover, she has petrified the lower half of her husband's body since he had mortally wounded her demonic lover. The stories of the three old men embedded in "The Merchant and the Jinnī," as well as the stories of the second and the third dervish and "The Story of the Lady of the House" embedded in "The Porter and the Three Ladies," tell of the (temporary or permanent) transformation of human beings into animals. "The Story of the Third Dervish" moreover narrates the protagonist's experiences in a supernatural realm in which he enjoys the favors of forty beautiful maidens but is magically transported back to the ordinary world when he transgresses the taboo not to open a particular door. The dynamics of several tales, and not only those involving magic, result from illicit sexual activity, whether real or imagined. Just as sex and crime play a major role in the frame tale of the *Nights*, so they do in the embedded tales. The main genre of the core corpus of the *Nights* is thus not the fairy tale or tale of magic, but rather a didactic tale in which magic serves to teach proper behavior in various unusual, and sometimes outright fantastic, circumstances. Since the text addresses the inherent messages of its tales to the king, the *Nights* are at times regarded as a mirror for princes – a literary genre whose best-known representative is the originally Indo-Persian collection that in the West is known as *The Seven Sages (of Rome)*.

When talking about the *Nights* after the stage of the old manuscript, we need to distinguish which *Nights* we actually mean. The main reason for this necessary distinction is Antoine Galland's creative intervention in tradition. On the one hand, this intervention established a European tradition of the *Nights* that was cultivated in numerous translations and adaptations and that resulted eventually in transforming the *Nights* into a playground for European fantasy. Founded on previous Arabic tradition, this European tradition would regard a liberal embellishment of the *Nights* as legitimate, even up to and beyond the point of recognition. On the other hand, Galland's translation created a growing demand for Arabic manuscripts of the collection. This demand, in turn, contributed to the establishment of a new family of manuscripts whose repertoire would be enlarged from a variety of sources. Both strands of tradition would take the core corpus of tales as documented in the fragmentary fifteenth-century manuscript for granted.

The old manuscript was the one that Galland was able to use for his adapted French translation of the *Nights*, the very translation upon which the *Nights*' immortal fame in world literature is founded. Galland's version of the *Nights* was published in twelve volumes between 1704 and 1717. Since Galland had previously translated the tales of Sindbād, the sea-faring merchant, he had taken the liberty of inserting those tales into his translation, a decision that had already been made by some of the Oriental compilers of manuscripts of the *Nights*. When Galland's manuscript material was exhausted, his audience asked for more of the tales they had come to love. Galland responded to this request by continuing his *Nights* with tales from a source that was altogether unconnected to the Arabic manuscript tradition of the *Nights*. Chance brought him into contact with the Syrian Maronite Christian Hanna Diyāb, who narrated to him a total of sixteen stories, ten of which he published.

It is exactly these tales, in particular the tales of "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp" and "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," that determined the ensuing European and international perception of the *Nights* as a collection of "Oriental" fairy tales. To repeat, even though Galland presented Hanna's tales as an integral part of an "authentic" Arabic collection, Hanna's tales did not belong to the repertoire of the *Nights* before Galland included them in his version. It was Galland who transformed those tales from the oral performance of a gifted Syrian storyteller into the acme of the *Nights*, while never disclosing the tales' actual provenance to his audience. Still today, when asked about their memory of the *Nights*, even educated readers would usually name the tales of Aladdin or Ali Baba and would be perplexed if informed that these stories were only introduced by Galland and never belonged to the Arabic tradition of the *Nights*. It is important to stress this point again and again, since over and above the scholarly concern of studying the history and genesis of the *Nights*, Hanna's tales are those that suit the European notion of a fairy tale best. In particular, the tale of "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp" follows the well-known fairy-tale pattern of "rags to riches" in that a boy from humble origins wins the favors of the princess and with the help of a magic lamp commanding a potent Jinnī eventually becomes rich and powerful. All this happens to him quite undeservedly, thus conforming to the European notion of the fairy tale as a genre that makes the protagonist's (and, by extension, the

audience's) wishes come true. Since we do not have any traces of the tale's original version as told by Hanna, it has been presumed that Galland's reworking of Hanna's performance owes to Galland's own individual experience, since he himself rose from humble origins to the status of professor at the prestigious Collège de France. Magic as a means to the hero's undeserved success also plays a major role in a number of Hanna's other tales. In the tale of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," the poor woodcutter overhears the magic formula giving access to the robbers' treasure in the cave. In the tale of "The Ebony Horse," the magic flying horse constructed by a Persian magician plays a major role. And in the tale of "Ahmad and the Fairy Peri Banu," even a proper supernatural fairy makes an appearance helping the hero to overcome his adversaries. Beyond the scholarly discussion of provenance and authenticity, Hanna's tales satisfied the audience's expectations of what an Oriental tale should be like in terms of attractive strangeness and subliminal familiarity. To put it plainly, the audience appreciated familiar narrative concepts in an alien garb, thus laying the foundations for the appreciation of the *Nights* as a collection of "Oriental" fairy tales.

Even though Galland consciously mystified the origin of Hanna's tales, his method of including tales of an originally extraneous origin in the collection follows an age-old practice that had already been applied by the Arabic compilers of the *Nights* for many centuries. The textual history of the *Nights* before Galland strongly suggests that complete manuscripts of the *Nights* in Arabic had not been available at least since the date of the oldest preserved manuscript dating from the fifteenth century. As a matter of fact, we do not even know for certain whether "complete" manuscripts of the *Nights* in Arabic ever existed. The core corpus of tales preserved in the oldest known manuscript appears to have been stable. Beyond the core corpus, different compilers added tales from a broad range of sources in their effort to present a "complete" version; that is, a version that would actually cover a total of one thousand and one nights of storytelling, as the collection's title promised. This method of compilation had already been in vogue before Galland, but after the tremendous success of his translation it gained a different dimension. Now European researchers and adventurers traveled to Egypt and the Levant in search of the collection's "complete" manuscripts. Since such manuscripts were in demand, even though they did not exist, it was a matter of course for them to be

produced. Both before and after Galland, the Arabic compilers of these manuscripts took recourse to their traditional narrative heritage as it is preserved in numerous works, whether they be anonymous or written by authors known by name. Numerous tales, fables, and anecdotes were added to the collection's fragmentary corpus, and it is here that the tale of "Wardān the Butcher, the Woman, and the Bear" comes to the fore again.

Tales of magic and mystery had been a substantial ingredient of the *Nights* from its inception. Therefore, similar tales offered a natural choice for potential additions to the fragmentary manuscripts. From the numerous sources the compilers exploited, many of which cannot be identified, a so far little known work of history appears to have played a special, if limited, role. This is the *Kitāb Latā'if akhbār al-uwal* (Subtle Stories from the Forefathers) compiled by a certain Muhammad ibn ʻAbd al-Muʻtī al-Ishāqī, who died in 1623. This work of history shares more than ten tales with the manuscripts (and printed editions) of the *Nights*, and a total of four of these tales were apparently integrated into the *Nights* by copying them directly from Ishāqī's previous compilation. Two strong arguments support this hypothesis. First, the wording of the tales in the *Nights* corresponds closely to that in Ishāqī's work. Second, even though Ishāqī quotes the tales at places wide apart, they appear in the *Nights* in exactly the same order as in his work. For our present considerations, it is revealing to see that two tales appear in both works even right after the other without any intervening passages or other tales. These are the tales of "Wardān the Butcher, the Woman, and the Bear" and the following one of "The Princess and the Ape," both of them elaborating on the theme of bestiality. This finding allows us a close glimpse into the studio practice of the compilers who appear to have sifted through various works while choosing suitable tales to integrate into the manuscript they were compiling.

While we can be fairly certain that Ishāqī's version of the story was the one the compilers of the *Nights* copied, we do not know exactly on which source Ishāqī relied. The oldest known text of the tale of "Wardān the Butcher, the Woman, and the Bear" in Ibn al-Dawādārī's historical work shows traces of colloquial language, a fact that might be indicative of an origin from oral tradition. We cannot tell whether the tale lived on in popular tradition or not. Meanwhile, there is a version prior to Ishāqī that

in terms of text is so close to his version that it might well be the version he copied. It is probably not much of a surprise that this version is included in a treatise of sexuality, the book *Rujūʿ al-shaykh ilā sabāhu* (The Old Man's Return to His Youth), attributed to a certain Ibn Kamāl-Bāshā (died 1533). In this version, the witch's magic conjuration of water has been deleted in favor of her unswerving faithfulness to her dead bear lover. One of the few changes Ishāqī made, if indeed he copied this text, was to delete the overt mention of the bear's sexual organ, which Ibn Kamāl-Bāshā quotes to have been as large as that of a mule.

Even though the fairy-tale elements of magic and mystery play a major role in numerous tales of the *Nights*, the tales' outcome according to the Muslim worldview is ultimately ruled by destiny and God's omnipotence. And even when destiny has eventually foreseen a happy ending, the tales' characters are not entitled to passively submit to a fate they cannot change. Quite to the contrary (and irrespective of the fact that a passive hero makes a poor story), the characters of the *Nights* are forced to engage actively in shaping or rather fulfilling their destiny. In their historical context, the *Nights* mainly addressed a bazaar audience of merchants and their customers to an extent that they have been labeled a "mirror for merchants."[8] Considering this audience, a recurring character of the *Nights* is the merchant's son. Born into a well-to-do family, the merchant's son could just continue his father's business while enjoying the moderate luxury the profit of his trading activities would yield. But since this action would hardly create an electrifying story, the merchant's son is often a spendthrift. After his father's death, he squanders his fortune by inviting friends to lavish banquets, only to find that his friends are not friends after all when he goes broke. Like the princes of European fairy tales, he must from then on undergo trials and live through hardships until he finally regains his deserved position.

Sindbād, the sea-faring merchant, is probably the best-known character of this type, even though Sindbād is not exactly a good-for-nothing but rather an adventurer who tests his fate again and again until after a total of seven adventurous journeys he is finally prepared to settle down. At any rate, Sindbād's career as a merchant's son made the originally independent cycle of his tales fit neatly into the *Nights*. About a dozen of the tales in the *Nights* begin with the trope of the merchant's profligate

son, among them many well-known tales such as that of “The Sleeper Awakened,” in which the caliph makes the protagonist believe that he has been caliph for a day.[9] Again, some of these tales award a major role in the plot to magic. A particularly elaborate example of this sub-genre of fairy tales in the *Nights* is the tale of “Abū Muhammad the Sluggard.”[10] Here, the absurdly lazy son of a barber makes a fortune simply by actively engaging in the shaping of his fortune, even though the only thing he does is give a small coin to a merchant who is about to travel to far-away lands and ask him to bring back something for him. The only item the merchant manages to buy is a rugged monkey, but this monkey earns his owner tremendous wealth by diving into the sea and securing the most precious pearls. The tale might well end here, but the lowly hero who becomes rich is in for yet more trials and tribulations. The monkey proves to be a demon who uses the hero to break a spell protecting a rich merchant’s daughter from him, and when the spell is broken, he abducts her. Now the hero has to prove his worth first by finding his wife and then by conducting a complex magical ritual in order to annihilate the demon. Only when he has actively engaged in what destiny had in store for him is he allowed to live in peace, wealth, and happiness. The moral these tales teach is thus not the model of abandoning the self by passively trusting in a predestined, immutable future. Rather, the hero must engage actively in shaping his future so that his destiny can be fulfilled. Any kind of active engagement is praised and supported, often by magic, and will eventually lead to the fulfillment of the hero’s (and the audience’s) wishes in granting him wealth and status, as in a fairy tale.

A final point that needs to be mentioned with respect to the relation of the *Nights* to fairy tales is the collection’s history and impact in world literature after Galland’s translation. Even while Galland’s *Nights* was still not finished, his colleague François Pétis de la Croix published the competitive collection *The Thousand and One Days* (1710–12). Pétis de la Croix mystified his work by pretending to translate from an old Persian manuscript accessible to him, while in fact he presented a selective translation of tales from an Ottoman Turkish manuscript in the Royal Library in Paris. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, Galland’s *Nights* served as the ultimate inspiration for a whole new genre of orientalizing *contes de fées*, or fairy tales. Out of the numerous authors

who contributed to this genre, we should at least mention Jean-Paul Bignon (1662–1743) and his *Aventures d'Abdalla* (1712/14) and Thomas-Simon Gueullette and his *Les Mille et un quarts d'heure* (1712), both of which profited from a longing for fairy tales in the "Oriental" mode. And the *Nights* themselves served as a source of inspiration for various fancy sequels, such as the *Continuation des Mille et une nuits* (1788) compiled by Dom Denis Chavis and edited by Jacques Cazotte. In the nineteenth century, when Edward William Lane (1839), John Payne (1882–4), and Richard Burton (1885, 1886–8) for the first time presented translations based on Arabic texts and manuscripts, the *Nights* had already become an "Arabian fantasy," and travelers to the Arab world would read the *Nights* as an ethnographic guide to an anachronistic fairy-tale world they expected to find. The ultimate equation of the *Nights* with the European notion of the fairy tale was the new "translation" (1899–1904) by Joseph Charles Victor Mardrus (1868–1949), in which the compiler did not shy away from masquerading Egyptian folktales collected at the end of the nineteenth century as genuine components of the *Nights*. The fact that the Mardrus version of the *Nights* was widely acclaimed in France and enjoyed particular popularity with famous writers such as André Gide and Marcel Proust bespeaks, if anything, a European colonial attitude. Having been "discovered" by the West, the *Nights* were regarded as European property, a property that Europeans could tamper with at will – adapting, embellishing, and enlarging the texts that originated from a culture other than their own. Even though this attitude may be read as a tale of conscious disregard and playful exploitation, the *Nights* undoubtedly were and still are a major creative force on the international market of fairy tales.

Notes

1 Translated from Ibn al-Dawādārī, [*Kanz al-durar wa-jāmiʿ al-ghurar*] *Die Chronik* […], vol. 6: *Der Bericht über die Fatimiden*, ed. S. al-Munajjid (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1961), 302–7.

2 For this and other details relating to the *Nights* mentioned in the present chapter, see Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen, *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, 2 vols. (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2004).

3 See Aboubakr Chraïbi, *Les Mille et une nuits: Histoire du texte et classification des contes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 24–6.

4 Nabia Abbot, "A Ninth-Century Fragment of the 'Thousand Nights': New Lights on the Early History of the *Arabian Nights*," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 8 (1949): 129–64; reprinted in Marzolph, *Reader*, 21–82.

5 Solomon D. Goitein, "The Oldest Documentary Evidence for the Title Alf Laila wa-Laila," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 78 (1958): 301–2.

6 Chraïbi, *Mille et une nuits*, 30–2.

7 Tzvetan Todorov, "Narrative-Men," in *The Poetics of Prose* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), 66–79; reprinted in Marzolph, *Reader*, 226–38.

8 See Aboubakr Chraïbi, "Situation, Motivation, and Action in the *Arabian Nights*," in Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. I, 5–9.

9 For a list of these tales see Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. II, 808, Motif W 131.1; see also Ulrich Marzolph, "The Story of Abu 'l-Hasan the Wag in the Tübingen Manuscript of the Romance of 'Umar ibn al-Nu'mān and Related Texts," in *Journal of Arabic Literature* (forthcoming).

10 Ulrich Marzolph, "Narrative Strategies in Popular Literature: Ideology and Ethics in the *Arabian Nights* and Other Collections," in Wen-Ching Ouyang and Geert Jan van Gelder, eds., *New Perspectives on Arabian*

Nights: Ideological Variations and Narrative Horizons (London: Routledge, 2005), 39–50: 40–3.

11 Media-hyping of fairy tales

Jack Zipes

In the year 2012 there were many celebrations of the two-hundredth anniversary of the first edition of the Grimms' fairy tales, published under the title *Children's and Household Tales* (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen*). Perhaps the Brothers Grimm were happy about all the conferences, books, and papers that honored them and their tales. More than likely, however, they turned over in their graves because of the mass-mediated hype of fairy tales too often turned into trivial pulp for the masses by the globalized culture industry. Yet, perhaps, strange as it may seem, the Grimms are to blame for the hype.

There is a fascinating, somewhat ironic tale that needs to be told here, for the Grimms, aided by their first English translator Edgar Taylor, helped pave the way for the modern hyping of the fairy tales. And it all began with the Grimms' total commitment to salvaging the genuine essence of folk tales – their oral authenticity and historical significance, if you will. Moreover, children were *not* the designated audience of their books when they began their project of collecting tales. However, the Grimms were gradually persuaded to appeal to them until publishers and readers dismissed the Grimms' original intentions and branded their collection as children's literature.

But before I discuss how the Grimms became involved in hyping their own tales at the beginning of the nineteenth century to change their reception, I want first to discuss some of the theoretical aspects of hyping and the particular role hyping plays in the media paratexts of the culture industry. Then I should like to review how the Brothers Grimm changed the format and scope of their tales, primarily under the influence of Taylor's 1823 translation, *German Popular Stories*, to make their tales more accessible and popular among the reading public in Germany. Finally, I want to examine some recent filmic adaptations of fairy tales and consider whether the hyping of these films detracts from the value of the fairy-tale genre and storytelling in general. Underlying my endeavor or essay to understand the hyping of fairy tales is the question of whether the historical integrity of any genre or any project such as the preservation of

folk tales promoted by the Brothers Grimm can be appreciated and understood as part of our Western cultural heritage. Or, what happens to meaning and value in societies where hype is accepted if not celebrated as the norm?

Hyping and paratexts

In his recent, highly significant book *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*, Jonathan Gray defines hype as "advertising that goes 'over' and 'beyond' an accepted norm, establishing heightened presence, often for a brief, unsustainable period of time: like the hyperventilating individual or the spaceship in overdrive, the hyped product will need to slow down at some point. Its heightened presence is made all the more possible with film and television due to those industries' placement – at least in their Hollywood varieties – within networks of synergy."[1] He then notes that within the entertainment industry, synergy "refers to a strategy of multimedia platforming, linking a media product to related media on other 'platforms,' such as toys, DVDs, and/or videogames, so that each product advertises and enriches the experience of the other. And whereas hype is often regarded solely as advertising and as PR, synergistic merchandise, products, and games – also called *peripherals* – are often intended as other platforms for profit generation."[2]

Although hype is associated with hyperbole and extravagance, Gray argues that it has become part of business as usual, and what formerly appeared to be uncommon and on the periphery of culture today is actually at its center and more decisive in creating meaning than source texts. Whether talking about a book or a film, Gray maintains that the meanings of primary texts or source texts are now determined by paratexts – that is, by all the peripheral products and things that surround or are connected to the texts. Here he is building upon the work of Gérard Genette, who created the term and indicated that paratexts prepare us for other texts; they are gateways to assessing a product or artifact.[3] In the case of literature or a book, the paratexts consist of the cover, the frontispiece, the title page, the format, the type, the bibliography, the index, the blurbs on the back page, the pre-publication advertising, the web pages on the

Internet, reviews, blogs, interviews, talks delivered by the author on tour, and so on. Gray maintains that "paratexts are not simply add-ons, spinoffs, and also-rans: they create texts, they manage them, and they fill them with many of the meanings that we associate with them. Just as we ask *para*medics to save lives rather than leave the job to others, and just as a *para*site feeds off, lives in, and can affect the running of its host's body, a paratext constructs, lives in, and can affect the running of the text."[4]

Though Gray often alludes to hyping as a nuisance, he never explores how pervasive and deleterious it is to the quality or the vacuousness of the product that it allegedly promotes. This is because he does not critique how hyping actually depletes the meaning of a product – just as a parasite can weaken if not kill its host – or conceals its lack of quality through exaggerations and lies. In some respects almost all hypes rely on fairy-tale motifs because they promise that the product will magically transform us if we imbibe it, wear it, touch it, smell it, breathe it, smoke it, drink it, steal it, live in it, or aspire to it. Hypes delude us into believing that the impossible can be realized by some kind of magical transformation – that is, through the product we are to consume. Hypes are tantalizing and frustrating because they keep us trying and wanting to fulfill the impossible. They distract to prevent critical reflection. In effect, hypes celebrate meaningless and wanton consumption. Yet, Gray wants hyping and other peripherals to become more artistic and lend themselves to the quality of the source text. This wish is impossible because the basis of hyping is artful exploitation through untruth; the purpose of hype is to discard and belie the essence of an artwork, to transform it into a desirable commodity, and to make it profitable not necessarily for the author/creator of a work but for the corporation that assumes property rights to the text. Indeed, copyrighting is part of the paratext, for it gives a publisher, for example, the right to create and add as many meanings he wants to the text. If Gray's study is valuable, it is because he explains just how peripherals work.

Let us examine how the meaning of a literary work is created in contemporary Western societies using Gray's description of how hyped peripherals operate. As Gray explains, citing Genette, paratexts prepare readers for an approach to the text and an ongoing discourse after the text has been published. Depending on the author of a book, famous or young

and recently discovered, its publisher might announce the signing of a contract with a succinct and glowing description of the book before it is in print or even written, as in the case of the “Harry Potter” sequels by J. K. Rowling. Depending on the genre, readers will already be prepared to read the work in a certain way. Of course, an indicated genre will already predispose a reader. Fans of science fiction, mysteries, true romances, fantasy, non-fiction, and so on are already trained to read in a certain way, and publishers will alert target and guide groups that a certain type of book will soon appear. After the announcement, all sorts of mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, websites) will be approached with the publisher’s publicity releases and promotions that describe the book along with blurbs. Readers will begin to discuss the forthcoming book and even begin to debate its contents before they have read the book. Its meaning is well on its way to being created by reading audiences and promoters. All kinds of posters and pictures will reveal the cover of the book. Interviews and readings will be held. Once the book is produced, publishers will seek to have the book placed in the windows of bookstores or in prominent places, and ads will be featured on the Internet; reviews will appear on Amazon and other booksellers’ websites. The book’s front and back covers will have a lavish design, and the title is carefully chosen to intrigue readers. Blurbs by famous people and authorities certify that the book is unique and that readers have never read anything like it. Once the book is actually accessible, reviews begin, and discussions by readers in informal groups – on phones, through texting, at schools and universities, on the Internet, through e-mail – contest or agree with all the previous hyped promotions and meanings that have circulated. Hundreds if not thousands of new meanings will be produced. There will be follow-ups such as additional interviews, tours, and readings by the author. In fact, the author might be moved to retract or question the meaning that he or she sees in the literary work. The author might be encouraged to write a sequel, prequel, or a similar work. Whatever the case may be, authors lose control and are no longer in touch with their work, which circulates in a world of hype.

Lost in the circulation of commodified peripherals is the author-intended “essential meaning” of the literary work and the author, what I call its integrity. Of course, one could argue, as many French critics such as Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault have done, that there is no such

thing as an essential meaning or an author.[5] Meaning is produced through diverse readings of the text, signs, and even the author, and meaning will be subjectively and relatively produced. Yet, there is always something intrinsic to a work of art even if we consider it bricolage. The signs of an artwork are humanly and skillfully assembled by a particular individual within a literary tradition. A material cultural heritage has its basis in what humans memetically consider relevant; these relevant signs and objects enable readers to adapt to their environment and fit together as societies evolve. Hype is not relevant, and it is only by critically "deflating" hype that we come close to understanding intrinsically relevant relics and new cultural products. To truly read a literary work or film, we must first learn to deflate the hype.

Why and how the Grimms hyped their tales

The Brothers Grimm revered all types of tales told by the folk, not just fairy stories or wonder tales. They thought that the stories they collected were innocent expressions and representations of the divine nature of the world. For them, the simplicity of the pristine spoken tales was culturally and historically profound, and the Grimms viewed themselves as cultivators of lost relics whose essence had to be conserved and disseminated before the tales vanished. In particular, they firmly believed that these wondrous tales enabled people to get in touch with their inner selves and the outside world. They fostered hope. This was because "genuine" fairy tales served as moral correctives to an unjust world and revealed truths about human experience through exquisite metaphor.

What fascinated or compelled the Grimms to concentrate on old German literature was a belief that the most natural and pure forms of culture – those which held the community together – were linguistic and were to be located in the past. Moreover, modern literature, even though it might be remarkably rich, was artificial and thus could not express the genuine essence of *Volk* culture that emanated naturally from people's experiences and bound the people together. By 1809 the Grimms had amassed a large number of wonder tales, legends, anecdotes, and other documents, and they sent their friend Clemens Brentano, the poet, fifty-four texts for his private use and made copies for their own work. In 1812, the novelist

Achim von Arnim, perhaps Brentano's closest friend at that time, visited the Grimms in Kassel and encouraged them to publish their own collection, which would represent their ideal of "natural poetry." He suspected that Brentano would never use their tales. Thanks to Arnim's advice and intervention, the brothers spent the rest of the year organizing and preparing eighty-six tales for publication that formed volume one of the first edition of *Children's and Household Tales*.

Unfortunately, the 1812 volume was not well received by friends and critics, who thought that the tales were too crude, were not shaped enough to appeal to children, and were weighed down by the scholarly notes. Nevertheless, the brothers were not deterred from following their original philological and poetical concept. Even though there were some differences between Jacob and Wilhelm, who later was to favor more drastic poetical editing of the collected tales, they basically held to their original principles to salvage relics from the past. Just how important these principles were can be seen in their correspondence with Arnim between 1812 and 1815, when the second volume of the first edition appeared. In a very long letter of October 29, 1810, Jacob wrote to Arnim: "Contrary to your viewpoint, I am completely convinced that all the tales in our collection without exception had already been told with all their particulars centuries ago. Many beautiful things were only gradually left out."[6] The Grimms wanted to restore this beauty through careful editing.

In another letter written on January 28, 1813, Jacob wrote: "My old saying, which I have already defended earlier, is still valid: one should write according to one's ability and desires and not adapt to outside forces and comply with them. Therefore, I don't consider the book of tales [*Märchenbuch*] as being written for children, but it does suit them very well, and I am very happy about that. However, I would not have worked on it with pleasure if I hadn't believed in its importance for the most serious and adult people as well as for poesy, mythology, and history."[7]

Though the Grimms made it clear in the second volume of the first edition of *Children's and Household Tales*, published in 1815, that they would follow the agenda of their first volume, they also explained the important difference they made between a book for children and an educational manual (*Erziehungsbuch*) in their preface. After the publication of the second volume in 1815, however, the Grimms were once

again disappointed by the critical reception. They were convinced that they were being misunderstood. Although they did not abandon their basic notions about the origins and significance of folk tales in the second edition of 1819, there are definitely significant indications that they had been influenced by their critics to make the tales more accessible to a general public and more considerate of children as readers and listeners of the stories. There had been 156 tales published in the first edition, and the number now grew to 170 without the extensive scholarly notes, which appeared in a separate volume in 1822. Wilhelm did most of the editing and often made changes to avoid indecent scenes such as Rapunzel's pregnancy, eliminated tales that might be offensive, and stylized them to evoke their folk poetry and original virtues. Yet, despite these changes, it was clear that the Grimms continued to place great emphasis on the philological significance of the collection, which was intended to make a major contribution to understanding the origins and evolution of language and storytelling. The layout and contents of the two volumes of 1819 make it abundantly clear that the Grimms were still dedicating the tales to the perusal of adults. In short, although many changes were made in the texts of the second edition, including the addition of religious legends, and although the Grimms now wanted to include children more directly as part of their audience, they remained ideologically and philologically true to their principles. Their book, *Children's and Household Stories*, was not a book for children. Not yet.

As I have explained, there were clear signs that they wanted to attract younger readers and their families and convince them of the great value of their work. Two important paratexts indicate that the Grimms were leaning toward hyping their collection of tales: the first is the preface; the second is the use of Dorothea Viehmann's portrait. In the preface to the 1819 edition, they state that

> these stories are suffused with the same purity that makes children appear so wondrous and blessed to us; they have the same bluish-white, flawless, shining eyes, which are as big as they will ever get, even as other body parts remain delicate, weak and awkward for use on earth. That is the reason that we wanted, through our collection, first of all to serve the cause of the history of poetry and mythology,

> but it was also our intention that the poetry living in it be effective and bring pleasure wherever it could, and also that the book serve as a manual of manners [*Erziehungsbuch*]. To that end we are not aiming at the kind of innocence achieved by timidly excising whatever refers to certain situations and relations that take place every day and that simply cannot be kept hidden. In doing that you can fool yourself into thinking that what can be removed from a book can also be removed from real life. We are looking for innocence in truth of a straightforward narrative that does not conceal anything wrong by holding back on it. Nonetheless, in this new edition, we have carefully eliminated every phrase not appropriate for children.[8]

This statement repeats many things that the Grimms wrote in their correspondence with Arnim, but it is more striking for its hyperbole, especially the flowery language, and apparent concession to critics who wanted them to include children as readers or listeners. Moreover, it is clear that they are trying to exaggerate and persuade readers about the profound authenticity of the tales. To do this more effectively, they introduced Dorothea Viehmann as the type of ideal storyteller that can be found among German peasants:

> Frau Viehmann was still quite vigorous and not much over fifty. Her features were firm, intelligent, and pleasant; her eyes were bright and clear. She had the old stories clearly in mind, and she herself said that not everyone had this gift and that most people could not keep things in the right order. She narrated carefully, confidently, and in an unusually lively manner, taking pleasure in it…Devotion to tradition is far stronger among people who always adhere to the same way of life than we (who tend to want change) can imagine. For that very reason, oral narratives, which have stood the test of time, have a certain intimacy and inner effectiveness than other things, which may on the surface seem more dazzling, rarely attain. The epic basis of folk poetry resembles the color green as one finds it throughout nature in various shades: each satisfies and soothes without ever becoming tiresome.[9]

The hyping of the purity of the tales and the ideal "peasant" storyteller, Dorothea Viehmann, conceals the strong editing of the tales by Wilhelm Grimm and the real identity of Viehmann. In two very important essays,[10] the scrupulous German philologist Heinz Rölleke has demonstrated that the Grimms added Christian references to make their "educational manual" more explicitly Christian and strengthened the "pure" moral quality of the tales. In addition, he points out that Dorothea Viehmann was by no means a peasant or illiterate. She was the wife of a tailor and stemmed from a French-Huguenot family and knew French. That is, she was not a "typical" peasant storyteller, although she certainly told her tales in a modified Hessian dialect and was exceptionally talented, so much so that she made a great impression on the Grimms. Symbolically, her portrait meant a great deal to them because she appeared as a genuine representative of the *Volk* and spokesperson for all the types of tales in their collection.

What is fascinating about the peripherals of the 1819 edition, especially the preface and the portrait of Viehmann, is that they convinced Edgar Taylor to go a few steps further in hyping the first English edition, *German Popular Stories* (1823).

Taylor's adaptations of the Grimms' tales are extraordinary and significant because his ideological and poetical premises were based on the ideals and myths about the origins and dissemination of the folk tales that the Grimms perpetuated. Indeed, he fulfilled them to such an extreme that he subverted the Grimms' hyped intentions even though he thought he was following them. In addition to this ironic case of misunderstanding, the Grimms praised Taylor's *German Popular Stories*, when they received a copy in 1823, and they were highly impressed by George Cruikshank's illustrations and communicated their pleasant impression to Taylor:

> The added copper engravings are an original advantage of your book. They are lightly and cleverly worked out and suit the subject matter. Here in Germany at this time, we don't know of any artist who possesses a similar talent. Perhaps Chodowiecki, who died in Berlin, had such high quality. We had only wished that you might have made use of the portrait of Frau Viehmann for your readers that was on the

> front of our second volume because it makes a pleasant impression in and of itself. They would have liked very much to have seen one time the face of such a smart, German peasant.[11]

Even though the Grimms knew English quite well, they had no idea whatsoever just how greatly Taylor transformed the Grimms' tales of the second German 1819 edition into a collection of moralistic English stories for children, freely adapted the tales, celebrated their genuine antiquarian quality, and eventually included Viehmann as the major character in the second revised edition of his tales, *Gammer Grethel or German Fairy Tales, and Popular Stories* (1839). Moreover, the marvelous comic illustrations by George Cruikshank gave the tales a certain framework of levity that they did not possess in the German editions.

Indeed, from 1839 onward, two different editions of Taylor's adaptations were published throughout the nineteenth century and competed with one another: *German Popular Stories*, generally produced in one or two volumes, and *Gammer Grethel or German Fairy Tales, and Popular Stories*, which provided a totally different framework for a smaller selection of tales once again heavily revised by Taylor.

What is significant about the 1839 title is the paratextual addition of the character "Gammer Grethel" and the term fairy tales to give the impression that the stories were ancient and magical and taken straight from the mouths of peasants. In fact, the entire book is shaped by the figure of a fictitious storyteller, based on a fictitious representation of Dorothea Viehmann by the Brothers Grimm, as an authentic peasant storyteller. In addition, emphasis was now placed on *fairy tales* thanks in part to Taylor's introducing fairies into the Grimms' tales that did not have them.

Altogether there were 42 tales in the *Gammer Grethel* book selected from the 1823/6 editions for this book, and they were organized in a different sequence within a frame. There are twelve evenings with three or four tales told each evening. The anonymous collector and translator of the tales informs his readers that he had gathered the tales in Germany from Gammer Grethel, an honest farmer's wife, and asked her permission to write them down for the benefit of young friends in England. With this

dramatic paratextual change, Taylor obviously hoped to gain and influence more young readers. Indeed, all his different editions grew in popularity especially since his works were the only collections of putative Grimms' tales on the market that began using the latest forms of advertising to sell them. Success came in different forms of reprints and advertising.

In 1869, thirty years after Taylor's death, Taylor's widow granted the publisher John Camden Hotten permission to combine the first two editions of *German Popular Stories* into one book with the original prefaces by Taylor, an introduction by the famous critic John Ruskin, a letter endorsing the book by the even more famous author Sir Walter Scott, and a new advertisement. (Incidentally, this was the first edition in which Taylor's name as translator appeared on the title page.) All these peripherals added to the meaning of Taylor's adaptations, not to the integrity of the Grimms' collections.

In another example of how the Grimms' tales were hyped in strange intertextual and intracultural ways, Taylor's distant cousin John Edward Taylor published his own free translation called *The Fairy Ring: A New Collection of Popular Tales* in 1846 with illustrations by the gifted Richard Doyle. This volume contained fifty-five newly translated tales from *Children's and Household Tales*, and they were just as bowdlerized as the tales in Edgar Taylor's collections. What is astounding is that the different Taylor editions and publications, many of them pirated, disseminated false impressions of the Grimms' tales in English-speaking countries throughout the nineteenth century because these selected adaptations were the only versions available until the translations by Mrs. H. B. Paull in 1882, Lucy Crane in 1882, and Margaret Hunt in 1884. Nevertheless, it was Taylor's translation that held sway even up through the late twentieth century when Puffin Classics reprinted *German Popular Stories* in 1948 without mentioning Edgar Taylor anywhere in the book but making full use of the Cruikshank illustrations.

All the changes that Taylor made in his 1823 edition of *German Popular Stories* and later editions of his so-called translations had huge cultural consequences not only in the United Kingdom and North America, but also in Germany. The Brothers Grimm had been so impressed by the format of Taylor's book that they decided to publish in 1826 a shorter version of their Large Edition (*Grosse Ausgabe*), which contained fifty of their most

popular tales.[12] Shortly after receiving *German Popular Stories*, Wilhelm wrote to the Grimms' publisher Reimer in Berlin on August 16, 1823:

> A translation of Children's and Household tales has appeared in London with the title "German popular stories, translated from the Kinder- und Hausmärchen collected by M. M. Grimm with twelve plates by George Cruikshank." It has received such widespread praise that it has already, that is, after three quarters of a year, been reprinted. Now I wish to organize a *small German edition*, which, like the English edition, would contain only a selection [of the large edition] and which would include the tales only in *one volume*. It seems to me best if it would have a pocket book format…and would be sold as a pocket book at Christmas. You could have the witty and pleasant engravings of the English edition very easily copied on stone because they are completely suited to this and then would also be cheap. My brother [Ludwig Grimm] could also add an engraving to the book, sort of a Christmas present with a Christmas tree. Most of all I wish the book would be quite cheap, if it is possible, and would cost only a thaler. In this way, I believe, the book would become more accessible because not everyone can buy the three volumes of the large edition. Naturally, we would also dispense with the notes, the introductions, everything that is scholarly.[13]

Indeed, there were no notes or a preface in the first German Small Edition of 1826, but there were now seven illustrations by their younger brother Ludwig Grimm, very realistic and serious.

In no way, despite the Grimms' creation of the Small Edition in 1826, did they want their German tales to be treated as tales for children. In no way did they, or Taylor for that matter, want the philological and historical attributes of *Children's and Household Tales* to be neglected. Yet, this was exactly what happened throughout the nineteenth century in Germany and in English-speaking countries: the Grimms' different kinds of folk tales, derived allegedly from ancient German sources, became "fairy tales" for the entertainment of children. And it was not until the latter part of the twentieth century that the mis-reception and misunderstanding of the Grimms' tales were rectified in English-speaking countries. Of course, the

“rectification” has been limited due to the hyped Disneyfication and infantilization of the tales, processes that became dominant in the twentieth century and continue into the twenty-first.

Contemporary hyping of fairy tales

The Grimms promoted the collecting of all sorts of folk tales throughout the nineteenth century, and they were certain that if other educated men and women began gathering tales from the common people, these stories, especially the fairy tales, would resonate among young and old from all social classes. Indeed, to a great extent, they were right. The nineteenth century, especially in Europe and North America, became the golden age of fairy-tale collecting that led to the foundation of folklore societies. By the twentieth century, not only did the fairy tale and other simple folk genres begin to thrive by word of mouth and through print as they had for centuries, but they were also transformed, adapted, and disseminated through radio, postcards, greeting cards, comics, cinema, fine arts, performing arts, wedding ceremonies, television, dolls, toys, games, theme parks, clothes, the Internet, university courses, and numerous other media and objects. Among the modes of hyped advertising were posters, billboards, interviews, window dressings, department store shows, radio, television, Internet interviews, ads in newspapers, magazines, and journals, and all the other kinds of paratexts that accompany a cultural product. As I have argued in my book, *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre*, the classical fairy tales have become memes, cultural bits of relevant information, and the paratexts of fairy tales have formed memeplexes – that is, groups of variants that add to the meaning of the meme. In correspondence, Michael Drout, who has written a significant book about memes, *How Tradition Works: A Meme-Based Cultural Poetics of the Anglo-Saxon Tenth Century*, has suggested:

> In memetic terms, I think a para-text is a meme-plex that forms around a text, and the para-textual material can provide extra data about how to interpret what’s inside the text. That material, because it stays in its own form, can become separated from its original cultural context, which evolves more quickly than something in a fixed form can. The para-text, then, provides meta-data about how ambiguities in

> the main text should be interpreted. The most obvious place where this happens is when we get a particular image of an actor or actress (or animation) of a traditional tale, and that image is thereafter fixed in place even when some of the written descriptions might be more ambiguous, but I'm thinking that material like toys, posters, etc., also works to form around the text in this way (I have a box in the basement filled with my daughter's Disney princesses; these dolls lock into place a particular look for fairy tale characters whose descriptions are not quite as fixed as the icon designed to sell merchandise to little girls).[14]

Today we are inundated by fairy tales that are not only present in the home but are also taught from pre-school through the university in the United Kingdom and North America. They are in all walks of life, and to some degree, we even try to transform our lives into fairy tales. They have become second nature, or as Roland Barthes might say, fairy tales have become "mythic." They appear to be universal and natural stories of the way life should be while concealing their artistic constellations and their basic history and ideology. In my book *Fairy Tale as Myth / Myth as Fairy Tale*, I remarked that it is impossible to grasp the history of the fairy tale and the relationship of the fairy tale to myth without taking into consideration the manner in which tales have been revised, duplicated, adapted, and manipulated to reinforce dominant ideologies and often to subvert them.[15] To be more precise, the evolution of the fairy tale as a cultural genre is marked by a process of dialectical appropriation involving imitation and revision that set the cultural conditions for its mythicization, institutionalization, and expansion as a mass-mediated genre through radio, film, television, and the Internet. For the most part, the history of this memetic process is obscured if not negated today by hyping newly produced fairy-tale films, books, musicals, and other products as extraordinary achievements that actually cheapen the meaning of fairy tales that the Brothers Grimm and other nineteenth-century collectors sought to preserve. Hyping is the exact opposite of preservation and involves, as I have argued, conning consumers and selling products that have a meager cultural value and will not last.

Some recent fairy-tale films produced by the mainstream culture industry reveal how filmmakers and producers hype to sell shallow products geared primarily to make money. They use mass media to exploit the widespread and constant interest in fairy tales that has actually deepened since the nineteenth century. For instance, in December of 2010, the Disney corporation changed the name of the Grimms' "Rapunzel," called it *Tangled*, and announced: "Disney presents a new twist on one of the most hilarious and hair-raising tales ever told."[16]Actually, the Disney promoters should have called the film "Mangled" because of the way it slaughtered and emptied the meaning of the Grimms' and other "Rapunzel" folk tales. When viewed closely, *Tangled* is yet another inane remake of Disney's *Snow White*. The major conflict is between a pouting adolescent princess and a witch. The Disney films repeatedly tend to demonize older women and infantilize young women. Gone are any hints that "Rapunzel" might reflect a deeper initiation ritual in which wise old women keep young girls in isolation to protect them.

Gone, too, are any hints in Catherine Hardwicke's 2011 film *Red Riding Hood* that "Little Red Riding Hood" is a serious and complicated tale about rape. Let us recall the serious nature of this story that is made into a mockery by Hardwicke's film. The history of the tale type "Little Red Riding Hood" reflects the remarkable ways that the oral and literary traditions have interacted to produce conflicting versions of the same incident. The incident is the violation or rape of a young girl who goes into the forest on an errand or to undertake some kind of initiation test. Of course the motif of rape can be found in many Greco-Roman myths and most pagan cultures, and it is not clear when all the other significant motifs were brought together to form the basic structure of the "Red Riding Hood" tale that was disseminated in Europe. Jan Ziolkowski and Yvonne Verdier have maintained that fragments of this tale, without the red cap, can be found in late-medieval oral tales.[17] In particular, Verdier and the great French folklorist Paul Delarue have argued that the tale was probably circulating among women during the early part of the seventeenth century in southern France and northern Italy and was told among women in sewing societies. These tales were never titled and so the red cap (chaperon) does not play a role in them.

Delarue published a composite tale made up of several nineteenth-century versions that he called “The Grandmother”: Here a young peasant woman takes some bread and milk to her grandmother. At a crossroads in the woods, she meets a werewolf, who asks her whether she is going to take the path of the pins or the path of the needles. She generally chooses the path of the needles. He rushes off to the grandmother’s house and eats her, but he also puts some of her flesh in a bowl and some of her blood in a bottle before getting into the grandmother’s bed. When the girl arrives, the werewolf tells her to refresh herself and eat some meat in the bowl and drink some wine. A cat or something from the fireplace condemns her for eating the flesh of her grandmother and drinking her blood. Sometimes there is a warning. All at once the werewolf asks her to take off her clothes and get into bed with him. She complies, and each time she takes off a piece of her clothing, she asks what she should do with it. The werewolf replies that she should throw it into the fireplace because she won’t be needing it anymore. When the girl finally gets into bed, she makes several observations such as “My, how hairy you are, granny,” until the customary “My what a big mouth you have, granny.” When the wolf announces, “All the better to eat you, my dear,” she declares that she has to relieve herself. He tells her to do it in bed. But she indicates that she has to have a bowel movement, and so he ties a rope around her leg and sends her into the courtyard through a window. Once there the smart girl unties the rope and ties it around a plum tree and then runs off toward home. The werewolf becomes impatient and yells, “What are you doing out there, making a load?” Then he runs to the window and realizes that the girl has escaped. He runs after her, but it is too late, and she makes it safely to her home.[18]

It is unclear whether Charles Perrault knew some kind of oral tale like this when he published the first literary version in 1697. But it is clear that he must have known some version like this and transformed it into a tale in which a naive bourgeois girl pays for her stupidity and is violated in the end. Both Perrault’s tale and the oral folk version became popular in the eighteenth century, and more than likely they began influencing oral and literary stories that gradually became widespread throughout Europe. Today the “Red Riding Hood” tale type is considered one of the most famous fairy tales in the world.

Perrault's tale was translated into English, German, and Russian during the eighteenth century. In 1800, Ludwig Tieck published *Leben und Tod des kleinen Rothkäppchens* (*Life and Death of Little Red Cap*), and he was the first to introduce a hunter, who saves Red Cap's life. The Grimms also felt sympathy for Little Red Cap and followed Tieck's example in their versions. In addition, they added a second didactic part to show that the grandmother and Little Red Cap learned their lesson. Their tale includes two intact segments that were sent to them by two sisters, Jeanette Hassenpflug and Marie Hassenpflug, who were familiar with the Perrault version. The first segment includes the hunter who saves granny and Little Red Riding Hood; the second is similar to a moralistic coda in which Little Red Riding Hood and her granny demonstrate that they have learned their lesson and can defeat the wolf by themselves.

Following the publication of the Grimms' more optimistic "Little Red Cap," storytellers and writers have chosen either their version or Perrault's tale to adapt in hundreds if not thousands of different ways, and these two tales have also entered into the oral tradition. Indeed, the best writers, artists, and filmmakers have interpreted the basic plot in unique ways and have either consciously or unconsciously entered into a discourse about the civilizing process that involves rape, pedophilia, and manners. Not Hardwicke, however. She is all about hype, herself, and the spectacle.

Here much of the hype, which cost millions of dollars, began long before Hardwicke's film was even shown. For instance, *The Los Angeles Times* proclaimed: "Catherine Hardwicke understands impetuous teen heroines the way George Lucas reverse-engineers robot sidekicks. In March, the director of 'Twilight' and 'Thirteen' will unleash her newest troublemaker upon the world with a dark, sensuous spin on 'Red Riding Hood.'"[19] However, the only thing that Hardwicke demonstrated is that her theme-park sets, stereotyped characters, and father-turned-werewolf gave rise to a ridiculous, convoluted plot that bored audiences. But she does understand how to hype the film and all the products connected with it. Writing on March 8, 2011 in *The Los Angeles Times*, Susan Carpenter reported about the novel and e-book, which were issued before the film:

> The book debuted at No. 1 on the New York Times children's paperback bestseller list when it was released in late January, serving as a sort of multimedia prequel and pump-primer for the film, directed by Catherine Hardwicke. As an e-book, "Red Riding Hood" includes video interviews with Hardwicke and her many collaborators, an animated short film, audio discussion about the set design and props, costume sketches and Hardwicke's hand-drawn maps of the world where "Red Riding Hood" takes place, among other things…To novelize "Red Riding Hood," Hardwicke got the approval of her publisher, Little Brown. She just needed an author to write it. For that, she turned to a 21-year-old graduate of Barnard's creative writing program named Sarah Blakely-Cartwright.[20]

Neither the print novel nor the e-book is worth the paper or screen on which it is printed or beamed. Somehow, however, the celebrity Hardwicke and her producers had to keep trying to make money, and of course, there was a DVD issued in June of 2011 with special features including an alternate ending to the film, which depicts Valerie alias Red Riding Hood with a newborn child in her arms at her grandmother's house where her lover unites with her. If this were not enough, there was a sequel book to the film and prequel to the DVD, *Red Riding Hood from Script to Screen*, written by Hardwicke and David Leslie Johnson and published on April 12, 2011. It contains an introduction, notes, and sketches by Hardwicke; the screenplay by Johnson; ninety-six pages of color concept art, storyboards, and costume evolution and illustrations; and behind-the-scenes photographs. The synergy was completed later in June by the DVD. Generally speaking, profits for a planned blockbuster have to be obtained several weeks after the premiere, but in this case the film was a critical flop and commercial disaster.

As for other overhyped films, there is *Hoodwinked Too! Hood vs. Evil*, touted on one of the promotional websites on October 28, 2009, a year and a half before the film was even released:

> This is a film that all children should watch! A fun, exciting movie with a lesson to be learned by the end. The animation is quite exceptional, and the actors as well as actresses do a great job in

> displaying their roles within the film. The story is a must have for those who enjoy good happy endings. Not to reveal too much but the story of Hood vs. Evil is a very attractive one. Keep your eye on this film because it could be something to talk about for sometime.[21]

Yet, this computer-animated film is nothing less than an uninspired sequel to the 2005 *Hoodwinked*, which features Red Riding Hood and the wolf as sleuths, called upon to work together to rescue Hansel and Gretel from a witch. As the Associated Press reporter Jake Coyle has written, "Such mash-ups of fairy tales have become commonplace since 'Shrek' and children's books like David Wiesner's 'The Three Pigs.'"[22]

What is also commonplace, of course, is hype. Since the end of World War II, advertising and publicity have increasingly exaggerated and distorted the value of all products. We live in a world of hype, but it is also a world that manages to produce works of art that take fairy tales and the Brothers Grimm seriously – and not only the Grimms but many of the writers of classical fairy tales such as Charles Perrault, Madame d'Aulnoy, Hans Christian Andersen, Collodi, and Lewis Carroll. Their works continue to resonate with us not because of hype, but because of their integrity: they have tapped into our utopian need for the "corrective" worlds of fairy tales. In respecting the integrity of past fairy-tale artworks, numerous contemporary filmmakers such as Michel Ocelot and Catherine Breillat in France, Hayao Miyazaki in Japan, Jan Svankmajer and Jirí Barta in the Czech Republic, Christoph Hochhäusler in Germany, Yim Phil-Sung in South Korea, Garri Bardin in Russia, and Guillermo del Toro and Tim Burton in the USA have re-created fairy tales with such verve and imagination that, though they need advertisement, they do not depend on hype to appeal to audiences. They depend on our hope for changing the world in a meaningful way. The same can be said for some of the remarkable fairy tales written by such talented authors as Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie, A. S. Byatt, Marina Warner, Tanith Lee, Sara Maitland, and Philip Pullman in the United Kingdom; Margaret Atwood in Canada; and Robert Coover, Jane Yolen, Donna Jo Napoli, John Barth, and Francesca Lia Bloch in the USA. They do not need hype to be recognized as storytellers who are keeping the profound tradition of the fairy tale

alive. Thanks to them the Grimms can rest peacefully in their graves, for hype can never destroy the substantial quality of meaningful fairy tales.

Notes

1 Jonathan Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* (New York University Press, 2010): 5.

2 *Ibid*., 5.

3 See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane Lewin (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

4 *Ibid*., 6.

5 See Roland Barthes, "Death of the Author" (1967), in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977): 142–8, and Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" trans. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977): 124–7.

6 Reinhold Steig and Herman Grimm, eds., *Achim von Arnim und die ihm nahe standen*, vol. III (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1904): 237.

7 *Ibid*., 271.

8 In Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Tales* (Princeton University Press, 1987): 216–17.

9 *Ibid*., 218–19.

10 See Heinz Rölleke, "'Daß unsere Märchen auch als ein Erziehungsbuch dienen.' Die *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* der Brüder Grimm: Aufnahme und Veränderungen der Märchentexte und deren Intentionen," and "Von Menschen, denen wir Grimms Märchen verdanken," in Rölleke, *Die Märchen der Brüder Grimm: Quellen und Studien* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2004): 278–88 and 23–36.

11 Otto Hartwig, "Zur ersten englischen Übersetzung der Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm," *Centralblatt der Bibliothekswesen* 15.1/2 (January–February 1898): 8.

12 See Hermann Gerstner, ed., *Grimms Märchen: Die kleine Ausgabe aus dem Jahr 1825* (Dortmund: Harenberg, 1982).

13 *Ibid*., 348.

14 E-mail exchange with Michael Drout on July 1, 2011. See his book for a further discussion of memes: *How Tradition Works: A Meme-Based Cultural Poetics of the Anglo-Saxon Tenth Century* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006).

15 Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth / Myth as Fairy Tale* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994).

16 http://adisney.go.com/disneypictures/tangled. Retrieved in January 2013.

17 See Yvonne Verdier, "Grand-mères, si vous saviez: Le Petit Chaperon Rouge dans la tradition orale," *Cahiers de littérature orale* 4 (1978): 17–55, and Jan Ziolkowski, *Fairy Tales from Before Fairy Tales: The Medieval Latin Past of Wonderful Lies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).

18 For a translation see Paul Delarue, ed., *The Borzoi Book of French Folk Tales*, trans. Austin Fife and illustrated by Warren Chappell (New York: Knopf, 1956).

19 http://herocomplex.latimes.com/2010/11/16/red-riding-hood-director-catherine-hardwicke-explains-the-big-bad-sexy-secret. Retrieved July 21, 2014.

20 Susan Carpenter, "'Red Riding Hood' movie is already a hit as a novel and e-book," *Los Angeles Times* (March 8, 2011). http://articles.latimes.com/2011/mar/08/entertainment/la-et-red-riding-novel-20110308. Retrieved July 21, 2014.

21 "Hoodwinked Too! HOOD VS. EVIL," April 28, 2009. www.hollywoodgo.com/movie/hoodwinked-too-hood-vs-evil-3396. Retrieved in January 2013.

22 Jake Coyle, "'Hoodwinked Too!' – More Polished, Less Funny," Associated Press (April 29, 2011). www.mercurynews.com/movies-dvd/ci_17949919. Retrieved July 21, 2014.

12 Transformations of E. T. A. Hoffmann's tales from Hawthorne to Oz

Holly Blackford

Like oral fairy tales, which are circulated, altered, and embellished by different tellers, literary fairy tales draw upon various written and oral traditions. In his 1852 tale about a scarecrow named Feathertop, created and brought to life by a witch, Nathaniel Hawthorne offers commentary on the way in which his craft of writing tales combines discrete artistic legacies to create something fresh for an American landscape. The witch Mother Rigby makes her scarecrow from a ragbag of fine materials that represent various European nations, combined with common farm items found in the witch's home. Feathertop's body is made from a broomstick, flail, pudding stick, broken rung of a chair, hoe handle, meal bag stuffed with straw, and pumpkin; the clothes comprise a plum coat from London, velvet waistcoat, scarlet breeches from France, silk stockings, wig, and three-cornered hat, all of which are significantly dilapidated and therefore a vision of America as nobility in decline. The coat of "London make" has "relics of embroidery" but is "lamentably worn and faded," while the scarlet breeches had been "once worn by the French governor of Louisbourg" and given to "an Indian powwow" before being traded to the witch. Noting his fine clothes, the townsfolk ponder whether Feathertop might be a Dutchman, German, Frenchman, or Spaniard. The composition of the scarecrow suggests the enterprise of mixing pieces of European heritages with the American embrace of the common man, creating a hybrid "native" identity that, at the witch's command to "take his chance among the other men of straw," goes forth in the world to make his fortune.[1]

This hybrid composition of the American man, who stands for the American fairy tale, echoes an older mythology about "the American" as melting pot of "English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes," "animated with the spirit of an industry which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself" – sentiments articulated in 1781 by Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur in his letter "What Is an American?":

> [America] is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess every thing and of a herd of people who have nothing. Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one; no great manufacturers employing thousands, no great refinements of luxury. The rich and the poor are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe.[2]

However he signifies a national mythology, Hawthorne's scarecrow is also explicitly compared to the author's artwork; he is "merely a spectral illusion, and a cunning effect of light and shade so colored and contrived as to delude the eyes of men," like the "lukewarm and abortive characters, composed of heterogeneous materials, used for the thousandth time, and never worth using, with which romance writers (and myself, no doubt, among the rest) have so overpeopled the world of fiction" (256). The scarecrow stands for Hawthorne's writing – the tales themselves – and the witch stands for the author, who tricks others into believing the scarecrow (the composition) has inherent value, unity, integrity, and originality.

Tension between original invention and recycling of source material is as much at issue in the literary fairy tale as in the orally rendered fairy tale, even though the literary fairy tale is typically defined as an author's sole invention. In fact, the traditional distinction between oral and literary fairy tales has been challenged as romantic by critics such as Ruth Bottigheimer, who demonstrates that the circulation of print material in Europe likely explains the resemblances between stories in diverse regions.[3] In "Feathertop" and elsewhere, Hawthorne, who was criticized for plagiarizing German writer Ludwig Tieck and French writer Alexandre Dumas (see Hawthorne's defensive note in "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment"), reminds us that the separation of originality from sources is an impossible task.[4] Although he explicitly mocks his craft of writing as combining heterogeneous materials of Europe and buttressing those materials with homegrown American objects, Hawthorne in "Feathertop" ultimately mocks his reading public for imposing unity on a collection of scraps. Mother Rigby had originally intended to make a functional, ugly scarecrow, but on a whim she decides to make something "fine, beautiful, and splendid" (252), which, when she gives her "son" the pipe of life,

allows her to develop the scheme of sending him out into the town to woo Polly Gookin, Master Gookin's fine daughter, who is easily and quickly charmed by the "gentleman." Polly only echoes the gullible townsfolk, who see in this "stranger of very distinguished figure" "nothing short of nobility" (262). Noting his European raiment, they assume him a noble stranger, superior to the American town. As he is absorbed in his pipe, "[t]here needed no other proof of his rank and consequence than the perfect equanimity with which he comported himself, while the curiosity and admiration of the town swelled almost into clamor around him" (264). In other words, they build his nobility from nothing but the shimmer the artist places on raw materials.

Only one exceptional child – and a dog – sees in the scarecrow not a European gentleman but a common pumpkin, which of course evokes the ending of Washington Irving's 1819 "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." A shattered pumpkin, found next to the hat of Ichabod Crane in Irving's tale, implies that Ichabod's rival has used the local Dutch tale of the Headless Hessian to scare away the upstart Ichabod, who seeks to woo the wealthy Katrina Van Tassel. The tall, lanky, and misproportioned Ichabod is similarly figured as "some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield," but the point becomes not so much the falsity of the upstart – Ichabod's inability to appreciate the Dutch tale of the Hessian – but the way tales are *used* to create insider and outsider boundaries. Just as Irving established for American literature how local tales create community and national cultures, Hawthorne showed that the American writer (Mother Rigby in the story) combines source material so that it is no longer recognizable and locatable; the witch's "puppet" can be anything and can be used for her purpose of testing whether the self-made man can disguise his immigrant roots. Can an artist magically place a shimmer on sources that are not his own?

The method through which Hawthorne discusses his composition practices in "Feathertop" echoes his dissatisfactions, expressed elsewhere, with finding storytelling inspiration in American culture. In the preface to his 1860 novel *The Marble Faun*, he writes:

> No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a Romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no

> mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a common-place prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land.[5]

Yet Hawthorne *did* develop a technique for "shadowing" and romanticizing everyday life in his tales, as he explains in his preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, where he distinguishes the Romance from the novel as symbolic rather than literal truth. In his "Custom House Sketch" prefacing *The Scarlet Letter*, he explains that common objects like a child's shoe (or an embroidered *A*) take on a different cast by the shadows of moonlight, which is basically a way of theorizing that the wonder tale and the real world coexist if looked at in the appropriate light.

Hawthorne is known as an American Romance writer, writer of fantastic tales and novels that deploy tropes of the marvelous and improbable, techniques that in *The Marble Faun* he explicitly credits to German writers of literary fairy tales Ludwig Tieck and E. T. A. Hoffmann. Describing how stories travel around Europe and become more and more marvelous, he credits his German sources for both theme and technique:

> The story of this adventure spread abroad, and made its way beyond the usual gossip of the Forestieri, even into Italian circles, where, enhanced by a still potent spirit of superstition, it grew far more wonderful than as above recounted. Thence, it came back among the Anglo-Saxons, and was communicated to the German artists, who so richly supplied it with romantic ornaments and excrescences, after their fashion, that it became a fantasy worthy of Tieck or Hoffmann. For, nobody has any conscience about adding to the improbabilities of a marvellous tale.[6]

Hawthorne's admission of using German tales and learning technique from them echoes his adaptation of Greek myths in his 1852 *A Wonder Book for Boys and Girls* and the practices of other Concord authors such as Louisa May Alcott, who wrote her own fairy tales (1849's *Flower Fables*), alluded to *Undine* and *Sintram* in her novels, and adapted tales like Cinderella to American themes, shifting the French Perrault version to "A Modern Cinderella, or The Little Old Shoe," which embraced the common

shoe and New England setting, work ethic, and home.[7] However, Hawthorne's application of heroes encountering the marvelous in his short tales appropriates the themes, technique, and tone of German writer E. T. A. Hoffmann in particular, whose literary fairy tales also convey aesthetic theories that influenced Hawthorne.

Contemporaneous with the Grimm brothers, who coined a scholarly approach to collecting sparse tales, and in the tradition of German romantics who embraced the literary fairy tale as a romantic aesthetic, Hoffmann developed the literary fairy tale in highly original directions. Rather than focus on a world that we perceive as marvelous and densely symbolic, he created protagonists continually torn between prosaic everyday reality and fantastic worlds of marvels and wonders. It is *never* clear which worlds are real. He always leaves open the possibility that his protagonists are simply insane, delusional, inebriated, or otherwise experiencing a split soul (often from sexual panic, argues James McGlathery), so they experience wonders that others do not see.[8] If this sounds like the plight of Young Goodman Brown in Hawthorne's oft-anthologized tale of a young man initiated into the wonders of witchcraft in the haunted American forest, it should. At the end of "Young Goodman Brown," the narrator leaves us with ambiguity about whether Brown *really* saw his fellow community members and wife practicing witchcraft in the forest or not; in the end it doesn't really matter because his *belief* that he saw them ruins his happiness.

Like traditional Grimm fairy tales as defined by Maria Tatar, tales by Hoffmann and Hawthorne focus on heroes who begin in banal domestic spaces and quickly cross the threshold into the supernatural, where they experience extreme trials and tribulations that symbolize their initial conflicts in family roles.[9] Brown is experiencing some sort of panic with his newly wedded wife Faith, and this panic is expressed by his flight into the wilderness, his encounter with villains who tempt him into witchcraft, and his vision of community members initiating his wife into witchcraft. Similarly, a newly wed husband in Hawthorne's "The Birth-Mark" becomes suddenly obsessed with his wife's birthmark and decides to cleanse her with potions he develops. As Tatar describes traditional Grimm tales, "The heroes of fairy tales are invariably introduced to us in dreary realistic settings utterly lacking the magical qualities associated

with the genre. But once the hero sets out in search of a distant ideal or finds himself obliged to take to the road, events suddenly take on the coloring of the marvelous and function as physical projections and representations of psychic processes."[10] For Hawthorne, the expansion of the psychological dimension had precedent in the work of Hoffmann. The wonders experienced by Hoffmann's characters have an intimate psychological depth that could denote a character's wondrous, artistic imagination or insane delusion. For example, his Marie of "Nutcracker and Mouse King," a famous tale that eventually became popular in America through the Russian ballet, is possibly on a wonderful journey with the cursed Nutcracker, whom she brings to life with her rich imagination and the influence of Herr Drosselmeier. Or, she may be projecting a rather sadistic fantasy onto a toy, much like Hoffmann's Nathanael in "The Sandman" imagines a doll named Olimpia to be his perfect woman. Nathanael believes Olimpia to be real until he finds her dismembered body and cut-out eyes, a vision that drives him to madness. We never know whether the folk figure of "The Sandman" – originally conveyed to the child Nathanael by his nurse, in classic nursery-tale fashion – in the story is real or not, but since he is real to Nathanael, his reappearance destroys Nathanael's sanity. Interested in the field of psychiatry to which he was exposed, and involved in several criminal cases in his position as a judiciary, Hoffmann fused his interest in eccentric characters with his expertise in the romantic arts, including music, opera, and written fairy tales (he adapted the classic German literary fairy tale *Undine* into opera, for example).[11] Hoffmann subtitled his fantastic tale "The Golden Pot" "a modern fairy tale," signifying a shift in interest as he conjoined real and fantastic worlds in the same narrative space. His interest in the human mind itself – what it creates and believes – can be considered the "modern" element of his fairy tales.

Hoffmann has been credited with developing the fantasy piece or "fantastique" (*Fantasiestücke*), the word titling his 1814 collection, which influenced the direction of French writers, not to mention Russian. The influence of Hoffmann can be equally discerned in the work of Hawthorne, who inhabited an environment flooded with German tales and philosophy (both in translation and in German). Complicit with Concord's overwhelming embrace of German sources, Hoffmann's tales crossed the

Atlantic in both original and translated versions. In Hoffmann, Hawthorne found the inspiring Romantic shadows he sought and claimed he had trouble finding in American culture. Hoffmann's "Sandman" has long been understood as a source for Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter," and myriad echoes of Hoffmann in other Hawthorne works are explained by the fact that translations of Hoffmann were so abundant that Hawthorne "could, in fact, hardly have avoided [reading Hoffmann] in the 40s."[12] Rimer demonstrates in an extensive comparison of the two authors that Hawthorne knew Hoffmann inside and out; although Tieck claimed Hawthorne was derivative of him, she establishes that Hawthorne's work resembles Hoffmann's more than Tieck's. The presentation of Hoffmann's "The Datura Fastuosa" in *The Corsair* in 1839 comments on the desire to give the public more of "the peculiar style and manner of its eccentric but gifted author," disagreeing with Sir Walter Scott's assessment of Hoffmann's perversity in his 1827 "On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition."[13] The eccentric tales of Hoffmann crossed the Atlantic with the Grimms and inflected the meaning of fairy tales for American writers.

The literary culture of Hawthorne embraced Hoffmann with a certain fervor, and Hawthorne would have encountered Hoffmann's tales in various ways. Carlyle's 1827 *German Romances* contained Hoffmann's "Golden Pot" and acknowledged him as the originator of the "Fantasy Piece,"[14] and Hawthorne borrowed the writings of Carlyle and Coleridge, who transmitted German thought to the English world, between 1839 and 1848. Hawthorne also borrowed works of other German authors from the Salem Athenaeum library, and his library at Old Manse contained many German authors, as did Emerson's, which is not surprising. Longfellow held considerable materials on Hoffmann, including *Die Fantasiestücke*, which contained "The Golden Pot" and Hoffmann's theory of "Callot's manner" (discussed below). Longfellow also translated some Hoffmann and commentary, and he promoted Hoffmann and other works of German literature in his classes at Harvard.[15] Hawthorne could have read some works in German, with his wife's encouragement and help, at Elizabeth Peabody's bookstore, where Fuller had translated and initiated conversations on German literature. But Hawthorne's rudimentary German was not an impediment to exposure to Hoffmann. He had frequent access to literary journals that contained translated criticism and translations of

German works; for example, an 1824 issue of *Blackwood* contains a review, partial translation, summary, and criticism of Hoffmann's *Devil's Elixirs*, which has been understood as a source for "Alice Doane's Appeal" and possibly *The Scarlet Letter*.[16]

Not only was "The Golden Pot" readily available in English and "Datura Fastuosa" printed six times in English in 1839, but also "The Sandman," along with other Hoffmann works, was printed in *Tales from the German* (1841) and in *Godey's* (1835). Hoffmann's "Das Fräulein von Scuderi" appeared in *The Democratic Review* (1843) only a year before Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter" was published there. Hoffmann's "Das Majorat" was printed in an issue of *The Democratic Review* (1845) that also included Hawthorne. Hoffmann's "Signor Formica" and "Master Martin" were printed in *The Beauties of German Literature* (1847). Even if Hoffmann could not read some of the tales directly, he could have read summaries and reviews in the wide circulation of Hoffmann's fame. Van Wyck Brook, in *The Flowering of New England* (1936), noted, "All the young men and maidens read the German authors…They read the tales of Hoffmann,"[17] just as they enjoyed the Grimms, Tieck, Goethe, Lessing, Jean Paul, Uhland, Schiller, Hegel, Kant, and Herder. Hawthorne would have attended lectures and discussions on Kant, Fichte, and Schelling at the Transcendental Club, so interest in German Romanticism shaped his literary and intellectual culture. The younger Alcott, of course, was so enamored with Goethe's *Faust* that she adapted it in her work throughout her life, from her early tale "The Freak of a Genius" (published under her pseudonym) to her 1877 *A Modern Mephistopheles*.

The influence of "The Golden Pot" and "The Sandman" can be directly discerned in Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter," which adapts Hoffmann's themes to the American context. In both "The Golden Pot" and "The Sandman," older male inventor-artist figures have created beautiful Edenic gardens with beautiful daughters who are not quite natural and human. Innocent young men are attracted to these dangerous daughters. Hawthorne uses this paradigm in "Rappaccini's Daughter" to create a fairy tale inverse to America-as-Eden, a nineteenth-century ideology of America as a fairy tale itself. In fact, Hawthorne's recurrent concerns with diabolical artistic creators who create automata (or otherwise tamper with nature) similarly reflect the recurrent interests of

Hoffmann as he used the fairy tale to explore the nature of art and the plight of the artist trying to transcend the real world. In “The Golden Pot,” “The Sandman,” and “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” dangerous worlds of artifice, in which older men have simulated natural gardens and young women, lure young men into their folds because they need the young men to lift curses or couple with their artificial daughters.

The plot and technique of Hawthorne’s “Rappaccini’s Daughter” owe their conception to Hoffmann’s “The Golden Pot,” in which Archivist Lindhorst, who is really a cursed salamander in need of a young man to fall in love with his daughter, lures Anselmus to his house and gardens with the promise of a job. The clumsy, unsuccessful, unemployed, and often inebriated Anselmus is a likely victim, his character akin to Jack the Giant-Killer. A typical Hoffmann character in that he is between worlds of everyday life and transcendent reality, neither of which is clearly real, the misguided young student Anselmus finds himself in the realm of the fantastic when elemental spirits (snakes) reveal themselves to him and one attracts him with her blue eyes. An expert copyist, he begins working for the Archivist to reproduce manuscripts he cannot even read, and – like Giovanni in “Rappaccini’s Daughter” – finds himself attracted to the Archivist’s splendid, exotic garden, particularly a “gigantic bush of glowing orange lilies. Intoxicated by the sight and by the sweet perfumes of the fairy garden, Anselmus stood as though rooted to the spot by enchantment.”[18] He can hear the laughter of the elemental spirits in the lilies and one orange lily walks towards him, revealing that it is actually the Archivist Lindhorst, a shape-shifter in a tale of continual metamorphosis, which Marina Warner equates with the core of the fairy tale.[19] The Archivist needs Anselmus to fall in love with his daughter: “if her gaze arouses in [a youth] an awareness of the distant land of wonders to which he can courageously ascend by shaking off the burden of common cares,” then her father can return to his rightful place among salamanders.[20] The Archivist has been sentenced to live among earth-spirits because he broke a rule by falling in love with a snake.

The seduction plot and the gardens that work upon Anselmus’s vulnerable psyche closely resemble elements of “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” in which Giovanni is attracted to Rappaccini’s daughter in her garden. Giovanni is particularly fascinated with Beatrice’s attendance of a striking

and “magnificent plant that hung purple gems beside the marble fountain,” which infiltrates Giovanni’s impression of Beatrice’s voice as “deep hues of purple or crimson and perfumes heavily delectable” (96–7). Not only does the description of the attractive yet corrupting flower correspond to the foliage that arrests Anselmus, pointing to impressionable youth – Giovanni’s “quick fancy” and “ardent southern temperament, which rose every instant to a higher fever pitch” (105) – but also both moments correspond to a scene in Hoffmann’s “Datura Fastuosa.” In it, the protagonist Eugenius walks into an exotic garden and is “intoxicated – bewildered with contradictory emotions – soft, indescribable melancholy – burning, yet nameless desire,” as he sees a Datura Fastuosa “literally covered with those fragrant, funnel-shaped flowers; so magnificent, that the poor student blushed” and at the same time hears “the full tones of a female voice, surpassingly beautiful. It was one of those out-pourings of the passionate inspirations of the south – the glowing romances of Spain.”[21] The idealized female voice arrests male listeners throughout Hoffmann’s fairy tales, and Hawthorne readily uses the trope. Such scenes occur in Hoffmann’s “The Automaton,” “The Sandman,” *Kater Murr*, and “Councillor Krespel.” Acknowledging “The Golden Pot” as a source, Hawthorne actually features a lizard in Rappaccini’s garden that crosses Beatrice’s path and quickly dies from her supernatural, poison breath.

As Rimer has observed, “Rappaccini’s Daughter” reveals kinship with both “The Golden Pot” and “The Sandman.” Both “The Golden Pot” and “Rappaccini’s Daughter” focalize the story through vulnerable young men who become prey to supernatural father figures when they dangle flowers and daughters to seduce the young heroes into completing their designs. Just as the Archivist’s daughter (a green snake) reveals her father’s designs to Anselmus, Beatrice in the end reveals that ensnaring Giovanni was her father’s design and not her own. Yet the focus of “Rappaccini’s Daughter” is Giovanni’s ambiguous perceptions as an onlooker, gazing into the garden, a technique stemming from “Sandman,” in which Nathanael uses a spyglass to glimpse Olimpia, and although her eyes appear dead in her “beautiful face,” through the glass “he thought he saw moist moonbeams shining from Olimpia’s eyes. It was as though her power of vision were only now being awakened; her eyes seemed to sparkle more and more vividly.”[22] These projections of feeling and

sensitivity recur; attracted to the doll's perfect singing voice, he makes the same mistake when she performs and he looks through a spyglass at her face. Of course, he has psychological reasons for projecting emotion onto her, given that he has accused his fiancée Clara of being a lifeless automaton for failing to appreciate his art. Similarly, Giovanni gazes into the next-door garden from above and wonders if he imagines the wilting of his bouquet or of insects from Beatrice's breath: "it seemed to Giovanni,…that his beautiful bouquet was already beginning to wither in her grasp. It was an idle thought; there could be no possibility of distinguishing a faded flower from a fresh one at so great a distance" (104). The point to both Hoffmann's and Hawthorne's tales is that men build fairy tales in their minds, particularly when gazing at women.

In fairy-tale fashion, both Nathanael and Giovanni are warned – Nathanael about Olimpia's uncanniness and automaton precision, Giovanni about Beatrice's poison nature – but unlike in the traditional fairy tale, it is always unclear whose perspective is correct or more "evil." It could very well be that Giovanni's growing obsession with purifying Beatrice from her poison state is what kills her; he gives her an antidote in the end, which takes her life as it purifies her. Her final words, "Oh, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?" (127), could refer to either father or lover. In Hoffmann's multiple stories with unclear boundaries about what is real and what are the delusions of a flawed (sometimes inebriated or mad) character, and in Hoffmann's continual play with boundaries of perception and imagination, projection and reality, Hawthorne found his theory of Romance as ambivalent shadows cast on real life. Shadows obscure clear perception. As Hawthorne writes in the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, "When a writer calls his work a romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material…he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights, and deepen and enrich the shadows, of the picture."[23] Hawthorne's theory of casting shadows and moonlight over everyday objects seems to recast the technique Hoffmann theorized as "Callot's manner" in his first collection, *Fantasy Pieces*. In his preface to those tales (which include "The Golden Pot: A Modern Fairy Tale") Hoffmann set out "The Callot Principle," based on the sketches of Jacques Callot, who drew troupes performing in the *commedia dell'arte*, where props, masks, and stylized

movements enhance the eccentricity and idiosyncrasies of characters. Hoffmann commented that art after Callot would take "the forms of everyday life, as they appear in the author's inner romantic intellectual world, and representing them in the strange shimmer with which they there exist."[24] Rimer notes that the distortion and eccentricity of the minister in Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil," about a character defined by one obsessive and ambiguous veil, shares a technique used by Hoffmann to depict his signature character Rat Krespel, who spends all his time disassembling violins to uncover the secret of sound. The style of both authors could be considered "in the manner of Callot," the subtitle of Hoffmann's published fantasy pieces in 1814. When in *The Marble Faun* Hawthorne explains that marvelous tales circulate through Italy to German romantics, he is explaining this stylistic lineage; characters with particular fetishes and obsessions – such as an obsession with eradicating a birth mark blighting a face – stem from Hawthorne's interpretation of Hoffmann's nod to the Callot principle.

The pervasive theme of artists or inventors (often also scientists) shaping objects or people into art or artifice can be seen in Hoffmann's "Nutcracker and Mouse King," "The Automaton," "The Sandman," "Councillor Krespel," and "The Golden Pot." The impulse to create art is a sort of manipulative madness in his male characters, whose eccentricity and unnaturalness alienate them from the real worlds and position them in supernatural realms. This theme of the perverse or unnatural machinations of the artist permeates Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter," "The Birth-Mark," "Drowne's Wooden Image," "The Artist of the Beautiful," "Feathertop," and *The Marble Faun*, the longer work in which Hawthorne acknowledged the influence of German writers on his fantastic style. Hawthorne's fantastic tales, however, take the theme of the difficulty of artistic creation into a specifically American context. Hawthorne traced the challenge of writing fantastic tales in America to both lack of inspiration and lack of appreciation. For example, in "The Artist of the Beautiful," the introspective, brooding Owen creates a masterwork that the American community cannot possibly appreciate. Even a child lacks appreciation for it, breaking the soaring, automaton butterfly with his crass hands.

Owen Warland of “The Artist of the Beautiful” is like the uncanny, unnatural figures of Drosselmeier in Hoffmann’s “Nutcracker” or Professor X in Hoffmann’s “The Automaton,” written after Hoffmann saw the famous chess-playing Turk designed by Wolfgang von Kempelen. In all these stories, men enchant others by producing elaborate mechanical wonders that seem alive. A clockmaker who loves beauty and seeks to imitate nature, Owen is out of step with his practical American community, creating “freaks” like a musical operation powered by watch machinery. Such toys based on clockwork flourished in the eighteenth century as play items and entertainment devices for royalty across palaces and courts in Europe.[25] They embodied cutting-edge technology; they served as gifts from one ruling family to another; they provided engineers and inventors with patronage from kings, queens, and emperors; and they were displayed in London and Paris to give the world a sense of the prestige and accomplishment of nations and human prowess. Only the rich could afford them, so automata makers moved in elevated circles to seek patronage. Owen, in contrast, is alienated, mocked, and depressed; his inebriation is highly reminiscent of Hoffmann’s characters trapped in Philistine reality and questing for more. Like other young men suffering misperceptions in these tales, Owen seems to have misperceived a woman named Annie, who, he thinks, “possessed the gift to comprehend him better than all the world besides” (459). There is little evidence to suggest she does because she marries an American blacksmith, who uses his hands and tools for practical work and shuns the enchantments of Owen, who, from the time he was a boy, “was attempting to imitate the beautiful movements of Nature, as exemplified in the flight of birds or the activity of little animals” (450). The emulation of Nature as the perfect art preoccupies most of Hoffmann’s stories, as expressly theorized by Lewis in “The Automaton” when he is revolted by the uncanny mechanical wonders that everyone else loves. As Tatar observes, “The hero of the fairy tale is, in the double sense of both the English and the German terms, a natural child (*ein natürliches Kind*),” which for Hawthorne means the hero is unappreciated by the commercialized, American populace.[26]

Just as Drosselmeier of “Nutcracker” spends a year on the costly and elaborate production of a mechanical castle used in the story to attract Marie and display his prowess, Owen only believes Annie will appreciate

his efforts at enchantment. Upon showing his mechanical wonder to her family, “Owen Warland might have told them that this butterfly, this plaything, was, in truth, a gem of art that a monarch would have purchased with honors and abundant wealth, and have treasured it among the jewels of his kingdom as the most unique and wondrous of them all.”[27] However, Owen is not in a land with monarchs and appreciation for playthings. His “toy” is destroyed by Annie’s child, who takes after his blacksmith father. Yet Owen feels not rejection but the brief wonder of Annie’s admiration, whether this is a misperception or not. The disjunction between the artist figure and the American context can similarly be found in “Drowne’s Wooden Image,” in which Drowne is a mediocre carver whose arts are largely uninspired except for the one great figurehead for a vessel that he creates in a dreamlike state from a beautiful muse. As he admits to himself, “Who would have looked for a modern Pygmalion in the person of a Yankee mechanic!” (312). As in “Feathertop,” in which the enchanted scarecrow, made only of patchwork, is sent to take his place amongst other men of straw, the fairy-tale roots of Hawthorne’s tales fall flat on American soil.

Hoffmann’s recurrent preoccupations and techniques, adapted to the American context through Hawthorne, demonstrate the innovative literary fairy tale that animated the American marvel tale. I mean *animated* quite literally, since Hoffmann’s recurrent theme of artistic inventors and the transformations they incite centers Hawthorne’s work as well. By using his wonder tales to depict the plight of the American artist and deliberate about the relationship of the American writer to his European roots, Hawthorne created models for subsequent American tales. Mark Twain used “The Prince and the Pauper” in his 1894 novel *Pudd’nhead Wilson* to convey the plasticity of race; two light-skinned babies, one a slave and one the master, are switched, for a study of environmental training. However, it is generally acknowledged that fairy tales came of age in America with L. Frank Baum’s 1900 *Wizard of Oz*, which expands Hawthorne’s idea of the scarecrow as self-made man in a land of wonders and marvels (*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is the first book of the series, and *The Marvelous Land of Oz* is the second).

In Hawthorne’s story, Mother Rigby tells Feathertop that he will succeed as a man “of pith and substance, with a brain, and what they call a heart,

and all else that a man should have" (236), identifying elements of manhood that would resurface in Baum's adaptation of Hawthorne's idea. However, in Hawthorne's tale, Feathertop does not succeed. In the moment he woos Polly, he catches a glimpse of himself in the mirror and sees his true form. Returning to his creator, he kills himself by throwing away the pipe that gives him the breath of life, and whereas Mother Rigby says she could re-animate him, she instead delivers the tale's final irony by meditating on manhood in the world:

> "Poor fellow!" quoth Mother Rigby, with a rueful glance at the relics of her ill-fated contrivance. "My poor, dear, pretty Feathertop! There are thousands upon thousands of coxcombs and charlatans in the world, made up of just such a jumble of worn-out, forgotten, and good-for-nothing trash, as he was! Yet they live in fair repute, and never see themselves for what they are! And why should my poor puppet be the only one to know himself, and perish for it?…I could easily give him another chance, and send him forth to-morrow. But no! his feelings are too tender; his sensibilities too deep. He seems to have too much heart to bustle for his own advantage, in such an empty and heartless world."
>
> (246)

While it is never clear whether Feathertop's rags and actions really transform him into a man or whether the shallow social world merely projects manhood upon him, it is clear by the end that he is a better man than most, in Hawthorne's satirical view.

Whereas Hawthorne used the puppet-scarecrow to critique the American public and suggest difficulties in artistic reception as well as masculinity, Baum used the scarecrow (needing brain) and tin woodman (needing heart) to put forth the optimistic image of the self-made man. Baum is similarly satirical, however; neither scarecrow nor tin woodman lack what they think they lack (brain and what they call heart); they only *feel* themselves to be imperfect men, for the reader can see the incredible problem-solving skills of the scarecrow and the feeling nature of the tin woodman, who carefully steps over insects so as not to hurt them and whose tears jeopardize his own mobility. Baum's rumination on the

production of fairy tales that would construct national mythology appears in his preface to *The Wizard of Oz*, where he states that he is writing a new fairy tale for modern children who do not need moral lessons attached to their tales and who would find stereotyped genies, fairies, and dwarfs antiquated. Both this preface and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* signal the acceptance of America itself as a fairy tale in which the farmer, the industrial worker, and nature (the lion) can come together, with the help of the humble country girl, and defeat the witch and wizard. The scarecrow, who only feels he lacks a brain after a crow tells him he is an inadequate scarecrow, moves from an isolated cornfield to ruling a kingdom; by the end of Baum's series he has built a golden corn palace with kernels as windows, a symbol of the triumph of artistic myth-making in America.

Oz marks a nation in transition (from rural to urban) as much as the relevance of updating fairy tales for an increasingly multicultural society, which later Oz books clearly mark by introducing isolated communities like the Cuttenclips and Fuddlecumjigs, whom the Kansas-born and bred Aunt Em initially views as strange and purposeless. The series similarly shifts attitudes about enchantment and artistry in an increasingly technological age. Whereas the first book in the Oz series recasts nineteenth-century concerns by featuring a wizard who falsely projects artistic "shimmers" to monopolize power, subsequent books reclaim the wizard figure (he learns magic from Glinda) and demonstrate that the American social utopia has a use for everyone, from patchwork girls to pumpkin heads to glass cats granted life with enchantment. In *Glinda of Oz* (1920), the council of various creatures of wonder has to combine talents to understand the sophisticated technology of a submerged city.

By tracing the legacy of Hoffmann's wizards and their automata in the evolution of American tales, we can therefore mark the gradual way in which the victimized heroes come to signify, in the twentieth-century American context, the possibility of self-making and capitalist entrepreneurship. While Hawthorne is uncertain about the migrant sources upon which he built in various ways, by 1913 we meet "Scraps," the patchwork girl of Oz, made of all colors because her wizard creators only like blue and she is supposed to feel ugly and humble, designed as she is to be a slave. The moment she comes to life she feels smart and beautiful, never ashamed of her roots like Feathertop or facing feelings of

inadequacy like Baum's Scarecrow. Scarecrow finds her the most remarkable creation imaginable. In her enchanted plural form, she walks forward with the confidence of the New Woman. This is a "happily ever after" if there ever was one – an instance of American optimism for a new century, which poor Feathertop, uncertain about the fate of American storytelling in 1852, could not share until his nation had come of age.

Notes

1 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Feathertop: A Moralized Legend," in *Mosses from an Old Manse*, centenary edition, ed. William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974), vol. X, 227. Further references to this and other Hawthorne stories will be to this edition and will appear in parentheses in the main text.

2 Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur, "What Is an American?" in *Letters from an American Farmer, Civics Online* (Michigan State University, 2005): www.civics-online.org/library/formatted/texts/crevecoeur.html. Retrieved January 24, 2014.

3 Ruth Bottigheimer, "The Ultimate Fairy Tale: Oral Transmission in a Literature World," in *A Companion to the Fairy Tale*, ed. Hilda Ellis Davidson and Anna Chaudhri (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 57–70.

4 Allienne Rimer, *The Fantastic in the Fiction of Hoffmann and Hawthorne* (dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1984), 86–7.

5 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, centenary edition, ed. William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Claude M. Simpson (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974), vol. IV, 3.

6 *Ibid*., 32.

7 Christine Doyle, "Singing Mignon's Song: German Literature and Culture in the March Trilogy," *Children's Literature*, 31 (2003): 50–70.

8 James McGlathery, *Mysticism and Sexuality. Part One: Hoffmann and His Sources* (Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1981).

9 Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* (Princeton University Press, 2003), 60–1, 72.

10 *Ibid*., 79.

11 Allen Thiher, *Revels in Madness: Insanity in Medicine and Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 171–3; McGlathery, *Mysticism and Sexuality*, 160.

12 On "Der Sandman" as a source for Hawthorne, see Hubert I. Cohen, "Hoffmann's 'The Sandman': A Possible Source for 'Rappaccini's Daughter,'" *ESQ*, 18.3 (1972): 148–53. See also Rimer, *The Fantastic*, 202.

13 Hoffmann, "The Datura Fastuosa: A Botanical Tale," in *The Corsair: A Gazette of Literature, Art, Dramatic Criticism, Fashion, and Novelty*, 1.26 (September 7, 1838): 1. Walter Scott, "On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition; and Particularly on the Works of Ernest Theodore William Hoffman [sic]," *Foreign Quarterly Review*, 1 (1827): 61–98.

14 Rimer, *The Fantastic*, 193.

15 *Ibid*., 99–201.

16 Alienne Becker, "'Alice Doane's Appeal': A Literary Double of Hoffmann's *Die Elixiere des Teufels*," *Comparative Literature Studies*, 23 (1986): 1–11.

17 Quoted in Rimer, *The Fantastic*, 192.

18 E. T. A. Hoffmann, “The Golden Pot,” in *The Golden Pot and Other Tales*, trans. Ritchie Robertson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 37.

19 Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), xv–xvi.

20 Hoffmann, “Golden Pot,” 56.

21 Hoffmann, “The Datura Fastuosa,” not paginated.

22 E. T. A. Hoffmann, “The Sandman,” in *The Golden Pot and Other Tales*, 106.

23 Hawthorne, “Preface” to *The House of the Seven Gables*, ed. Milton R. Stern (New York: Penguin, 1965), 1.

24 Rimer, *The Fantastic*, 79.

25 Tom Standage, *The Turk: The Life and Times of the Famous Eighteenth-Century Chess-Playing Machine* (New York: Walker, 2002), 2.

26 Tatar, *The Hard Facts*, 73.

27 *Ibid*., 352.

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